THE AMERICAN WEST

Cover: In his oil painting Homage to Catlin, *contemporary artist Kenneth Riley has re-created a scene that nineteenth-century painter George Catlin must have played many times as he set about his lifework, documenting the Indian tribes of North America and their fast-vanishing way of life. In Riley's painting, Catlin, surrounded by curious spectators, is shown working on the portrait of a Blackfoot chief, a tribe he painted during a fruitful 1832 visit to remote Fort Union on the Upper Missouri River. During that same decade Catlin completed the bulk of his great "Indian Gallery," more than four hundred portraits, landscapes, and genre paintings now part of the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C. For a selection from Catlin's Gallery and a description of its development,* *turn to page 20.*

Homage to Catlin, *which was exhibited at the 1977 National Academy of Western Art at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, is reproduced here through the courtesy of the Leanin' Tree Publishing Company, Boulder, Colorado.*

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

Artists with Spain's scientific expedition to the Pacific in 1789–94 not only drew the Indians, wildlife, and landscapes of the regions they explored, but they often portrayed expedition activities as well. In the charming wash drawing above, the artist, who may himself appear with sketchbook in hand beside the tent, shows expedition commander Alejandro Malaspina (seated, third from left) and two of his technical experts at work on one of the pendulum experiments they conducted at Mulgrave Sound (Yakutat Bay) on the Alaskan coast. Such activities were an important part of the Malaspina expedition, a noteworthy five-year voyage of scientific inquiry described in the article beginning on page 4.

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PHOTOGRAPHER ARNOLD GENTHE (1869–1942) achieved his permanent reputation with such classic photographs of San Francisco's preearthquake Chinatown as this circa 1896 view entitled "The Street of the Gamblers." Genthe not only raised the level of West Coast photography to an art form but also faithfully portrayed the essence of the nation's largest Chinese community just as westernization began. When Genthe left for New York in 1911, newspaperman and gifted amateur photographer Louis J. Stellman took over, documenting over the next several decades both Chinatown's disappearing Eastern traditions and its transition to Western ways. An essay on Stellman, accompanied by a portfolio of this long-obscure photographer's Chinatown pictures, begins on page 38.

THE AMERICAN WEST
THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN HISTORY

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Exploration *is not only the penetration of physical frontiers. In this issue, we celebrate men from four eras who have explored the West in different ways—through the media of scientific observation, art, the written word, and photography.*

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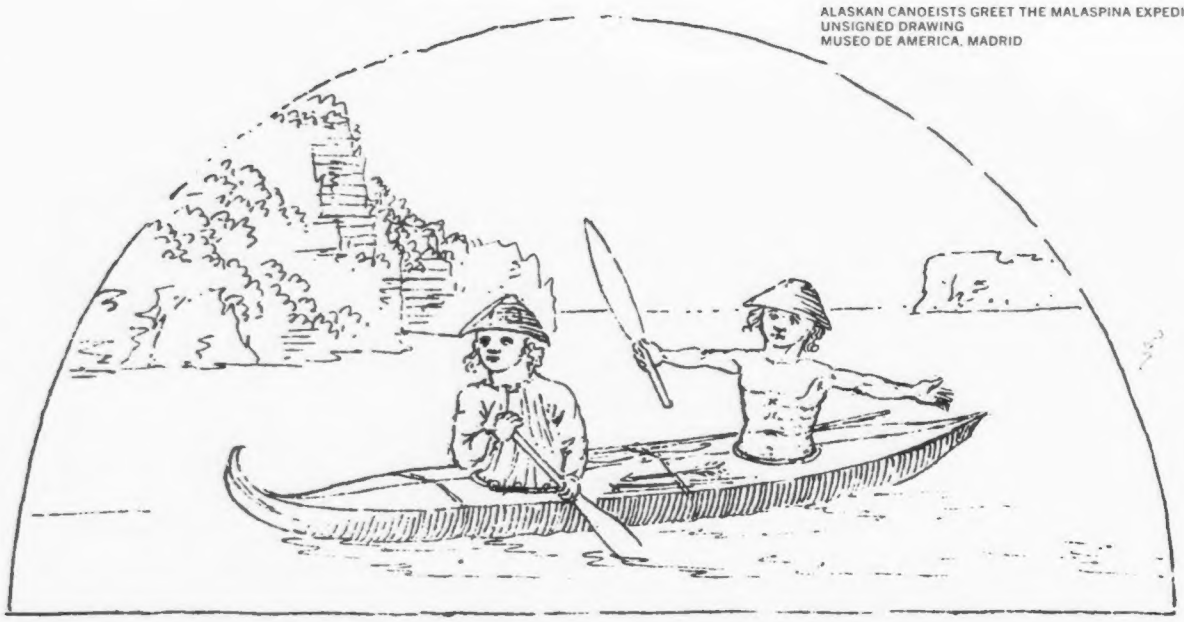


ALASKAN CANOEISTS GREET THE MALASPINA EXPEDITION, CIRCA 1791–92
UNSIGNED DRAWING
MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

The Return of MALASPINA

by Donald C. Cutter

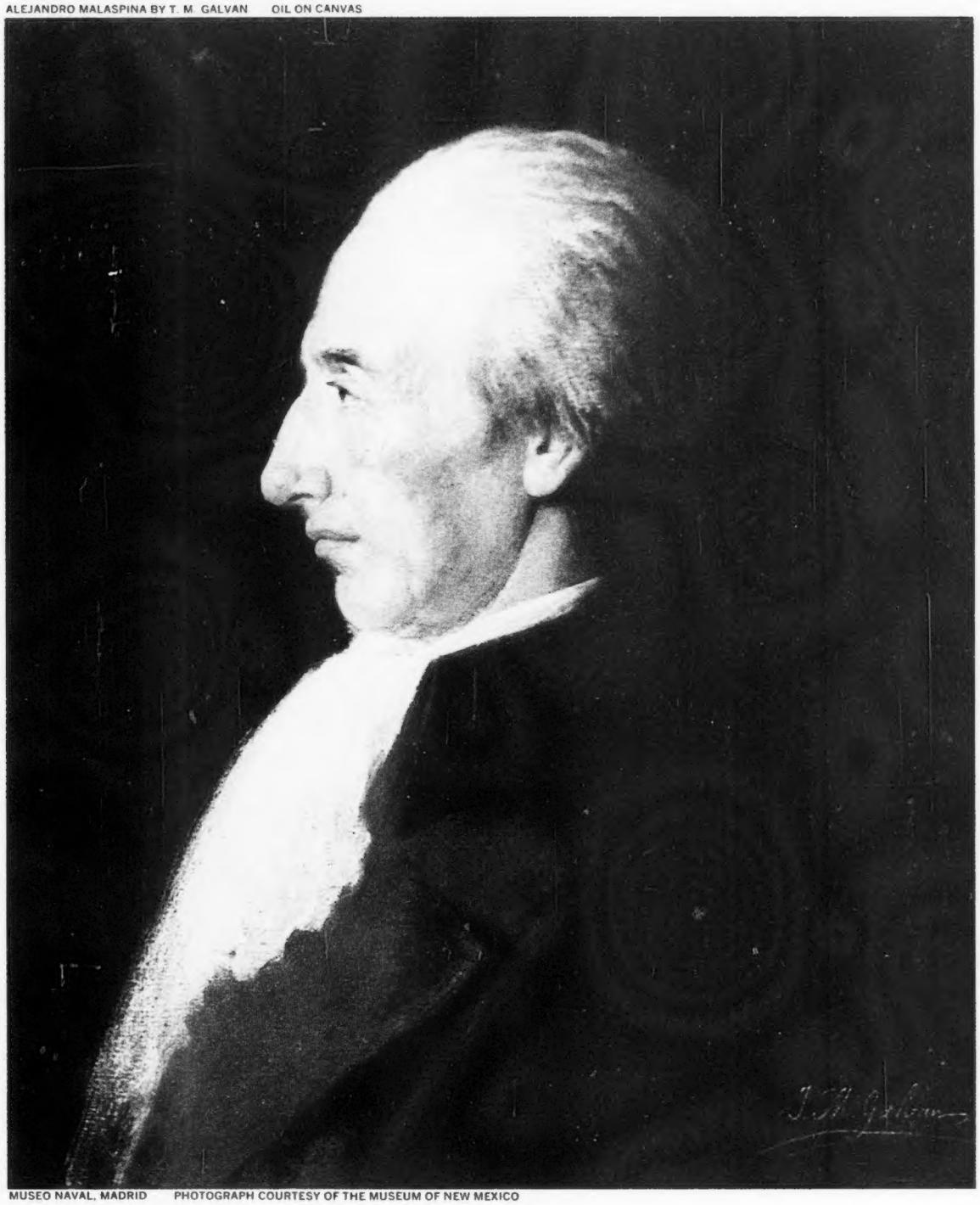
Almost two hundred years after he led an important Spanish scientific expedition into North Pacific waters, Alejandro Malaspina is receiving long-overdue recognition, thanks to a generous sampling from his collection which has been touring western museums

SPANISH SEAFARING SCIENTISTS of Alejandro Malaspina's "round-the-world" exploring expedition arrived on the Pacific Coast in 1791. There they collected a medley of material which, when viewed today, breathes life into otherwise dead events. Equipped with the most modern scientific instruments of their time, the trained personnel of the Malaspina expedition made observations for historical and technical descriptions, collected native artifacts, and created an archive of early art. Today precisely rendered landscapes, artistic portraits of Indian types, brightly hued tempera drawings of West Coast birds and animals, and Indian objects in basketry and wood all give visual dimension to this important but long-obscure scientific journey.

Malaspina's expedition was Bourbon Spain's most noteworthy scientific accomplishment. It was a maximum effort in cooperation with other scientific enterprises of the Age of Enlightenment to push back the frontiers of ignorance. Clearly, too, the three semi-scientific expeditions (1768–1779) of Captain James Cook of the British Royal Navy inspired the Spanish to emulate and try to surpass the efforts of that unfortunate Briton, whose explorations and career ended when he was killed by the natives of Hawaii. Curiously, well-prepared and well-executed though it was, Malaspina's voyage is today more appreciated than it was at any previous time, save for the brief period immediately after the conclusion of the sixty-two-month-long adventure.

Why is it that after almost two centuries there is a flurry of interest in what some have ungraciously called nautical knight-errantry? It is because Malaspina has been back for a long visit to the American West. It is not the Spanish captain in person, but rather the fruits of his diligent labor and

ALEJANDRO MALASPINA BY T. M. GALVAN OIL ON CANVAS



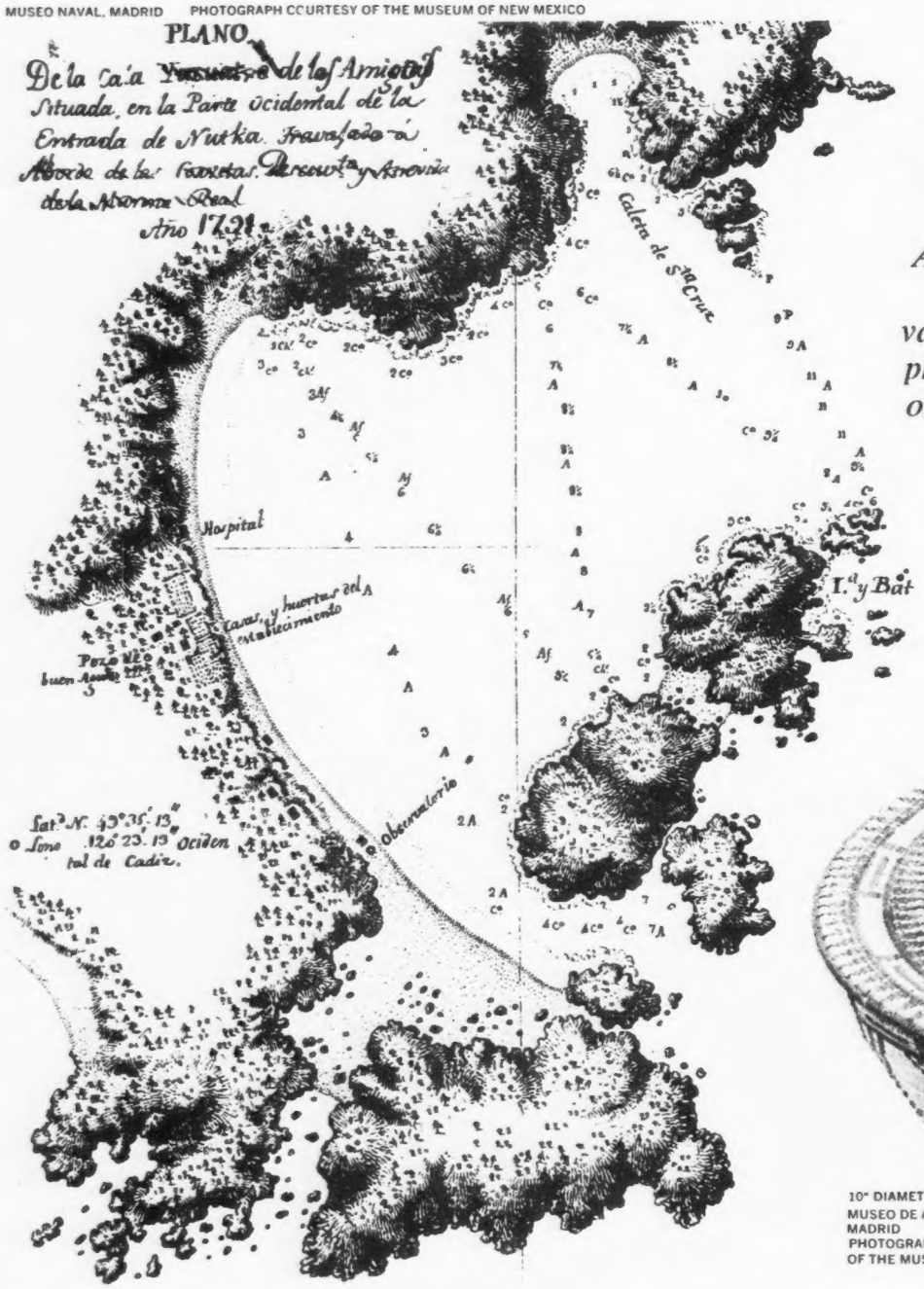
MUSEO NAVAL, MADRID PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

that of his technical staff that have returned. At museums in the American West, the Malaspina exhibit "In the Pursuit of Knowledge . . ." has been on view throughout the past year, and this month can be seen at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Originally the National Endowment for the Arts was approached by the organizing Museum of New Mexico for supporting funds to bring the Malaspina artifacts, maps, instruments, and drawings to the U.S. Then the cooperation of the major Malaspina material repositories in Spain, the Museo Naval of the Ministry of Marine and the Museo de América, both in Madrid, made possible the temporary displacement of their rich collections to the advantage of American viewers. Though in past years less valuable portions of these collections have been exhibited abroad for brief periods, this show is unique and will probably never again be duplicated in scope. And yet "In the Pursuit of Knowledge . . ." is really only a sample of the sustained labor of the Malaspina expedition's five years of collection

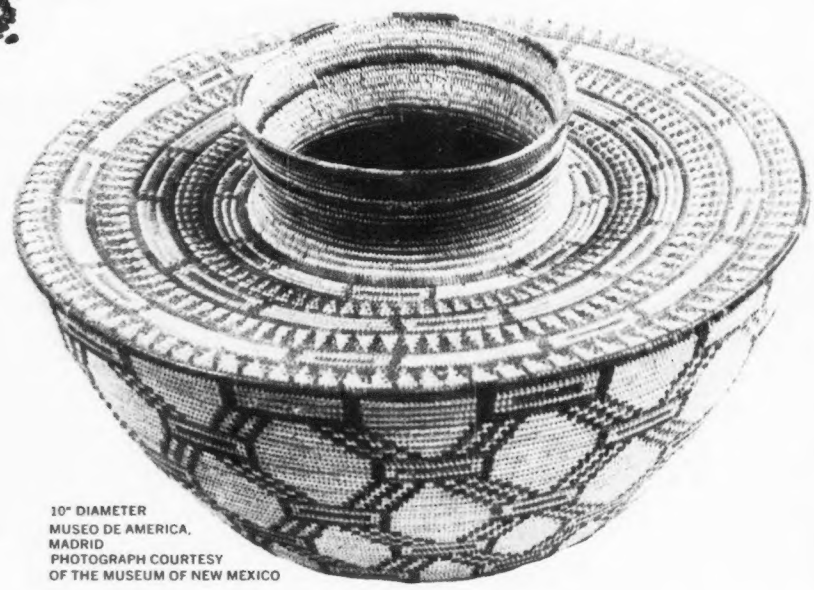
Above: Alejandro Malaspina (1754–1810), the brilliant commander of Spain's great late-eighteenth-century scientific expedition to the Pacific, was described by a contemporary as "of a grave and haughty aspect, with prominent features, a high serene forehead, a firm mouth and rather full lips, [and] eyes not over large but expressive." Tragically, Malaspina's five-year voyage brought him only the briefest glory. Upon his return to Spain, he became embroiled in court intrigue. Imprisoned and later exiled, he died in obscurity, while the notes, collections, and maps of his great expedition were scattered and virtually forgotten.

MUSEO NAVAL, MADRID PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO



In Pursuit of Knowledge...

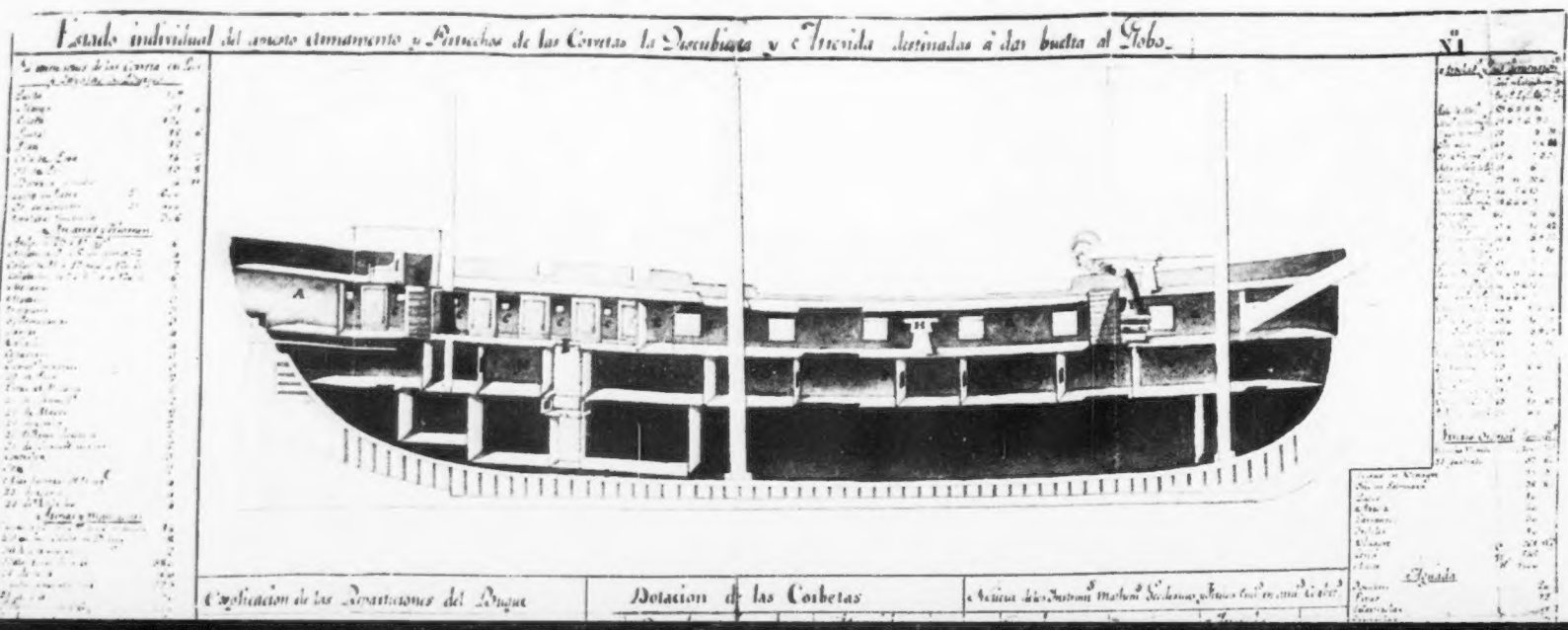
Admirably equipped for its day, the Malaspina expedition set out to expand knowledge in a variety of disciplines—geography, cartography, physics, botany, zoology, and ethnology among others. During a sixty-two-month voyage to the North and Southwest Pacific regions, its scientists, technicians, and artists amassed a great storehouse of information intended to be Spain's most significant contribution to the Age of Enlightenment.



10" DIAMETER
MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

The expedition's cartographers produced excellent charts of the areas they visited, including the one above showing Friendly Cove at Nootka Sound, complete with soundings and locations of the major Spanish structures. The detailed cross-sectional drawing of the twin corvettes Descubierta *and* Atrevida, *below—part of a remarkable document listing the expedition's personnel, equipage, provisions, and scientific instruments—suggests the meticulous planning involved in the voyage of discovery.*

Diligently gathering objects representative of the various native cultures they encountered, Malaspina's scientists obtained a collection of West Coast artifacts that continues to fascinate ethnologists today. The Chumash Indian basket jar, above, collected for the expedition in California, is among the oldest surviving examples of its kind.


Estado individual del armamento y Pertrechos de las Corbetas la Descubierta y Atrevida destinadas á dar buelta al Globo.
Nº 1
Distribucion de las Derrotas del Viage
Dotacion de las Corbetas

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

"TETRA REGIO MONTANUS, MONTEREY" MUSEO NAVAL, MADRID

Local flora and fauna were subjects of continuing interest for expedition scientists. This beautifully detailed color drawing by José Cardero shows a California valley quail, today the state's official bird.

"GEFE DEL PUERTO DEL DESCANSO" ATTRIBUTED TO JOSE CARDERO MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

This pencil and wash drawing of a chief from the coastal region along the Strait of Juan de Fuca (present-day British Columbia) is one of the many ethnographically valuable portraits rendered by expedition artists.

and experimentation. Even the Pacific Coast of North America is represented by a minority of the extant materials. Additional pertinent reports, artifacts, maps, drawings, instruments, portraits, and memorabilia can be viewed by museum visitors in Madrid, and by researchers in the Spanish archives.

SPAIN'S SCIENTIFIC ADVENTURE started as a personal project of the Italian-born Spanish captain Alejandro Malaspina. Born in 1754 into a noble family of Mulazzo in the duchy of Parma in Tuscany, the commander was still a young but highly successful officer when he took command of the expedition. Earlier, at age twenty, he had become a midshipman at the traditional naval school at Cadiz, and by age thirty he had circumnavigated the globe in the *Astrea*. In planning the expedition, Malaspina was joined by an equally distinguished colleague five years his junior, Commander José Bustamante y Guerra; together the two convinced the minister of marine to back the venture. Thus Admiral Antonio Valdés y Bazán became sponsor, protector, godfather, and overseer of the grand plan.

Yet no Spanish naval vessels were both available and appropriate for detailed, protracted navigation, nor were conventional men-of-war suited for the specialized scientific survey proposed by Malaspina and Bustamante. The result was the construction of two specially built corvettes fabricated to the most exacting specifications. Built on the north coast of Spain under careful supervision, the resulting vessels were identical twins christened the *Santa Justa* and the *Santa Rufina*, though they always sailed under their more impressive aliases *Descubierta* ("Discovery") with Malaspina commanding and *Atrevida* ("Daring") under Bustamante. Each displaced 306 tons, carried twenty-two guns, and shipped a crew of just over one hundred officers and men..

As officer complement, Malaspina and Bustamante were given almost free rein in selecting those most suitable for mission objectives. The most important to the Pacific Northwest Coast story were the future heroes of Trafalgar, Dionisio Alcalá-Galiano and Cayetano Valdés, the latter being the nephew of the sponsoring minister of marine. Cartographer Felipe Bauzá became chief of charts and maps, while Antonio de Tova Arredondo kept an alternative journal.

The scientific-artistic contingent forming the small non-navy segment included a series of illustrators and two naturalists. Two artists originally contracted in Spain proved unsatisfactory, one leaving the expedition in Lima and the other terminating in Mexico before the northern visit was effected. Fortunately for the artistic record there emerged an amateur, self-trained artist, José ("Pepe") Cardero. A small man of little physical strength, he was characterized as "not without artistic merit." Though this former cabin boy who began drawing while the corvettes were off the

"VISTA DEL ALOJAMIENTO DE LOS INDIOS Y DEL PUERTO DE MULGRAVE SACADA DESDE SU BAJO" DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

South American coast would never be named an official expedition artist, his drawings have an authenticity that places them first in historical value among surviving expedition materials. Cardero drew copiously and, avoiding the license employed by others, with great fidelity to detail—merits much more appreciated by modern historians and ethnographers than by art critics or even by his associates. Joining Cardero while on the Pacific Coast was an artist-engraver from the Mexican mint. A member of the Art Academy of San Carlos in the viceregal capital of Mexico City, Tomás Suría came aboard on a short term loan arranged by Viceroy Conde de Revilla Gigedo. Prior to arrival in Acapulco, Malaspina had written ahead to the viceroy requesting an artist to serve with the expedition for several months until two new Italian artists contracted in Europe could overtake the corvettes. Suría was the choice of Gerónimo Antonio Gil, Mexico's great art figure who had brought Suría with him when he had been sent to Mexico to establish the academy. The student was like the master, a disciplined artist who in addition to producing tasteful work during the expedition also kept an unauthorized journal filled with comments and rough sketches to be finished at a later time. Today Yale University Library holds the original.

Natural history, particularly botany, was essential to expedition purposes, but while on the Pacific Coast the corvettes were without the services of the chief of that specialty, Antonio de Pineda. At Acapulco, Malaspina detached Pineda for an interesting visit to various interior points in New Spain with plans to rejoin the group after the northern sortie. This left natural science observations more squarely on the shoulders of Pineda's senior natural

scientist, Dr. Tadeo Haenke, a jack-of-all-trades in the scientific world of his day. While planning the expedition, Malaspina had contracted this Bohemian-born naturalist sight unseen, based on the recommendation of a patron. Once having signed his contract, Haenke began a long trip to Cadiz where the *Descubierta* and *Atrevida* were staging for departure, but he arrived only in time to find the expedition's vessels outward bound, disappearing over the horizon. Though he boarded the next available ship for Buenos Aires, the naturalist was still not able to join Malaspina there, for his vessel sank off the coast of Uruguay. The scientist "saved himself by swimming ashore, all the while clutching a few necessary books," remnants of a larger collection lost at sea. Once in Buenos Aires, Haenke learned that his best method of intercepting the corvettes would be a trip across the Pampas and over the Andes to

Above: After two years en route, with stops at South American and Mexican ports, the Malaspina expedition arrived on the Pacific Northwest Coast in June 1791. In this drawing by expedition-cabin-boy-turned-artist José Cardero, the explorers' two corvettes, Descubierta *and* Atrevida, *are shown anchored in Mulgrave Sound (now Yakutat Bay, Alaska) for a ten-day stay. From here a party led by Malaspina himself made a futile attempt to find the fabled Northwest Passage. The explorers were more successful, however, in encountering the local Tlingit Indians, as Cardero's picture shows. Expedition members collected Tlingit artifacts, made copious notes on the Indians' customs and culture, and drew their portraits—thus providing valuable ethnological data for later-day scholars.*

Chile. Botanizing as he went, Haenke arrived in Santiago in 1790 to make his final rendezvous with Malaspina.

From the moment of his incorporation until his much later departure, Haenke carried out unceasing scientific investigation in a wide range of specialties. He became the first Ph.D. to visit the Pacific Coast and was of particular importance to the ethnographic, botanical, and mineralogical aspects of the visit north of Acapulco.

Originally the Malaspina party had intended to circumnavigate the earth, going in the customary east-to-west direction. The expedition had several purposes, including evaluation of Spain's colonial empire, already almost three centuries old and suffering from chronic aches and pains. Malaspina was interested in existing conditions and in proposing remedies for shortcomings. To this end, Malaspina, with a historian's sense of documentary research, utilized existing manuscripts to obtain a perspective on current conditions. Given a free hand, he sent his officers to both Spanish and colonial archives to abstract pertinent materials. Some were copied, while others were borrowed with perhaps little intention of returning them. In this manner both the archives of Sevilla and Mexico City provided Malaspina's men with copious information which became part of the expedition record. The result was that the Malaspina papers are more than just an account of the expedition, but also a compendium of information on earlier history, occasionally including totally unique manuscripts only vaguely related to the emphasis of the expedition. The same may be said of the large and varied body of artifacts collected by expedition members. Likewise, a considerable map collection resulted from copying existing charts and maps as well as making new ones.

Early expedition visits were made to known areas of the overseas empire. The Río de la Plata, Patagonia, the Falkland Islands, the island of Chiloé, Valparaíso, Coquimbo, Callao, and Guayaquil came under the scrutiny of these Iberian men of science. Panamá, Realejo, and Acapulco were next as the twin corvettes moved northward preparatory to the long Pacific Ocean crossing that lay ahead.

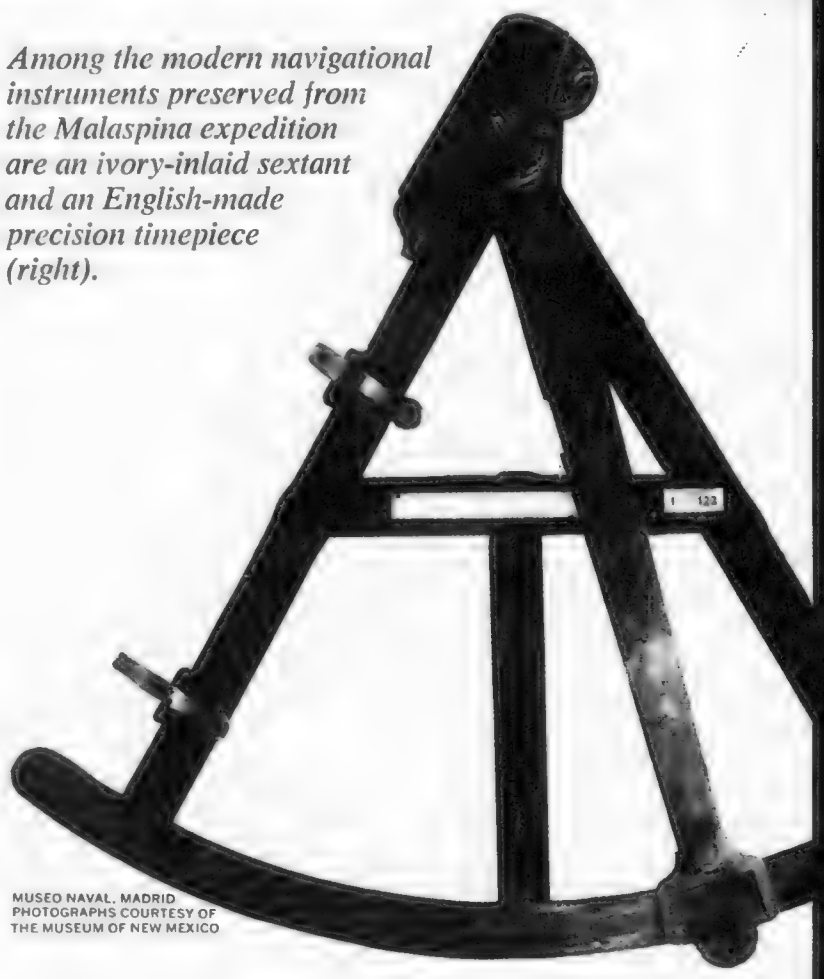
But while Malaspina's group was engaged in scholarly scientific study, Spain and England had come to the brink of open warfare over respective rights of sovereignty and trade. Focal point of the international dispute was Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island's verdant western shore. Since Spanish interests might be served by sending the round-the-world travelers to the Pacific Northwest in an effort to investigate and buttress Iberian claims, Malaspina's group was diverted from an anticipated island adventure in subtropical Hawaii to less pleasurable northern latitudes.

THE SUMMER of 1791 found the *Descubierta* and *Atrevida* ready for this hitherto unplanned northern visit. Officers of Spain's Pacific Coast naval base at San Blas gave Malaspina the advantage of such expertise as they

Exploring Unknown Coasts

The North Pacific Coast was still a little-known region, alluring because of its mythical Northwest Passage, when the Malaspina expedition arrived in 1791. There the expedition's scientists, cartographers, and artists, using the most modern technology of their day, drew highly accurate maps and charts, but sought in vain the fabled passage.

Among the modern navigational instruments preserved from the Malaspina expedition are an ivory-inlaid sextant and an English-made precision timepiece (right).



MUSEO NAVAL, MADRID
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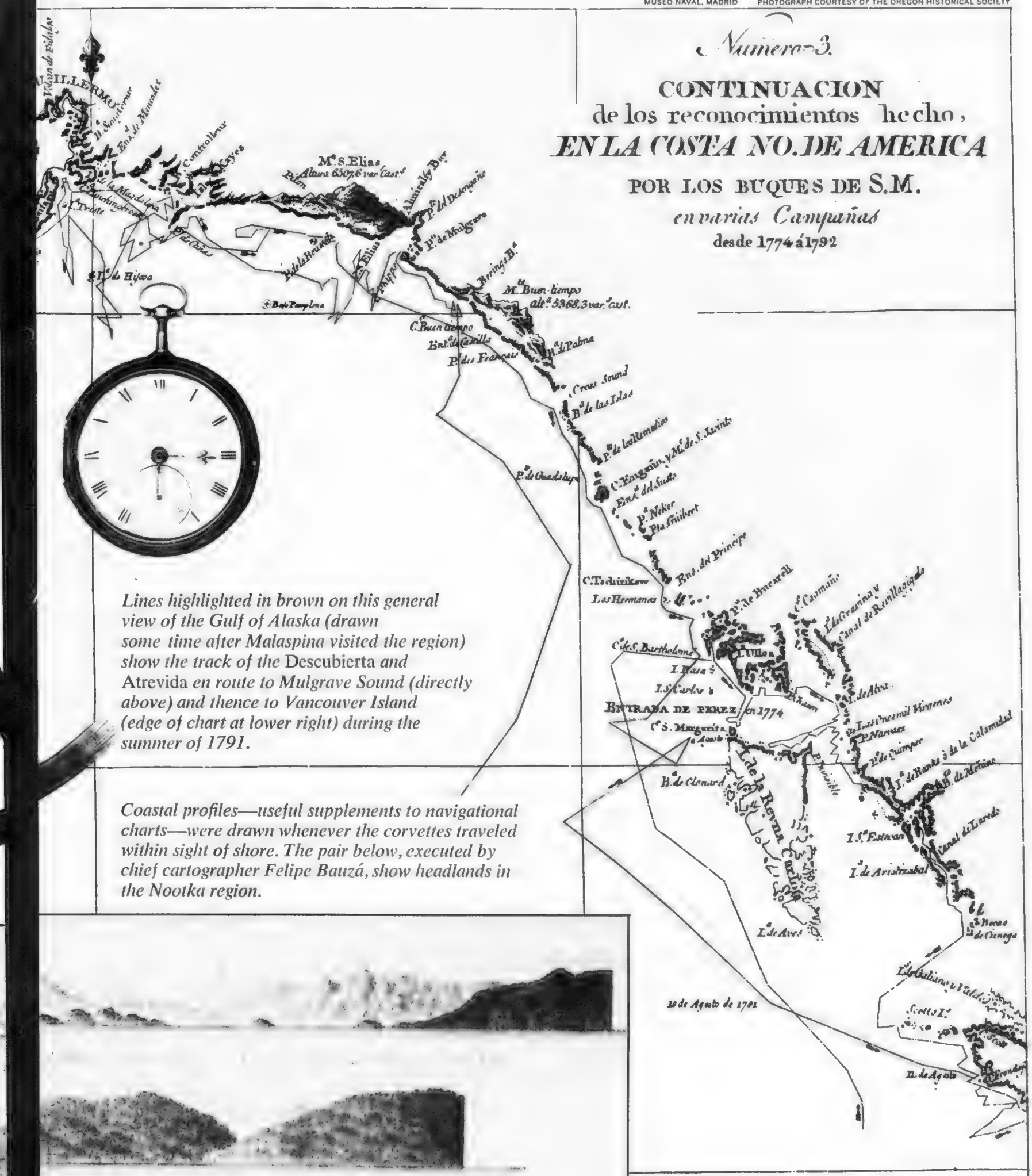
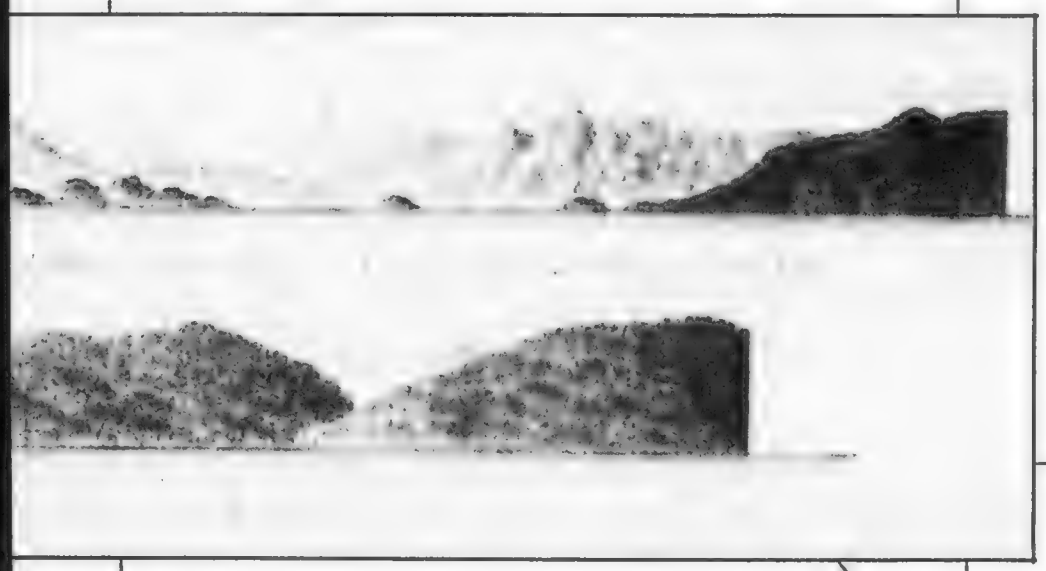


Lines highlighted in brown on this general view of the Gulf of Alaska (drawn some time after Malaspina visited the region) show the track of the Descubierta *and* Atrevida *en route to Mulgrave Sound (directly above) and thence to Vancouver Island (edge of chart at lower right) during the summer of 1791.*

Coastal profiles—useful supplements to navigational charts—were drawn whenever the corvettes traveled within sight of shore. The pair below, executed by chief cartographer Felipe Bauzá, show headlands in the Nootka region.

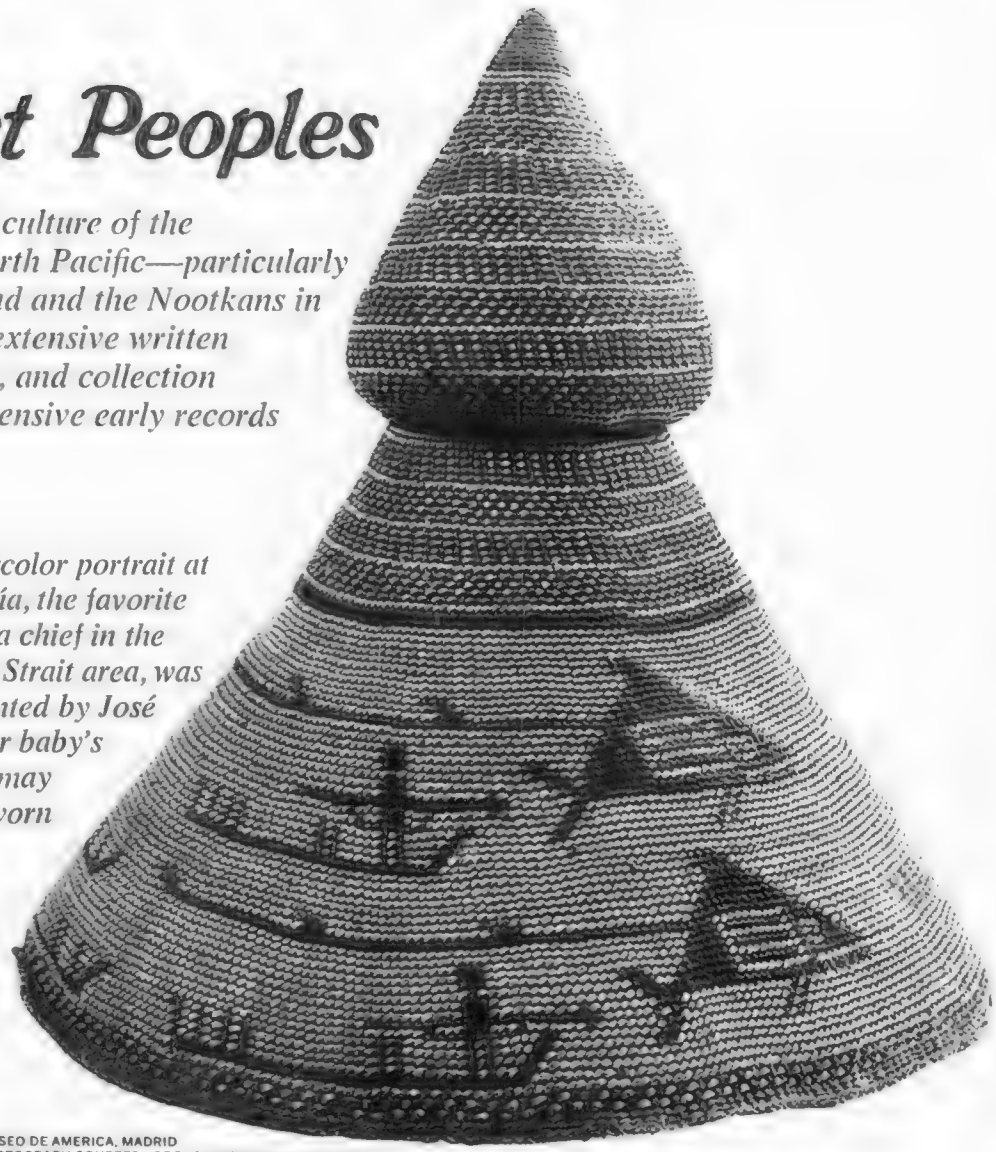


Northwest Coast Peoples

Malaspina's scientists studied at first hand the culture of the Native Americans they encountered in the North Pacific—particularly the Tlingit Indians of Alaska's Mulgrave Sound and the Nootkans in the area of Vancouver Island. The explorers' extensive written records, detailed genre drawings and portraits, and collection of artifacts comprise one of the most comprehensive early records of the peoples of this region.

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

The exquisite watercolor portrait at left, showing María, the favorite wife of Tetaku, a chief in the Juan de Fuca Strait area, was probably painted by José Cardero. Her baby's conical hat may have been worn for skull shaping.



MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

"CACIQUE DE MULGRAVE PIDIENDO LA PAZ A LAS CORRETAS"

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

Maquinna, the complex chief of Nootka, was of great interest and importance to the Spaniards, who alternately cajoled and threatened him in their attempts to gain sovereignty over the area. The finely detailed pencil sketch of Maquinna below, attributed to Tomás Suría, shows the Nootka chief wearing a straw-basket hat later known as a "Maquinna hat." The hat collected by the Malaspina expedition (at left) is probably the same one that Maquinna wears in his portrait. More than a foot tall and wide, it bears a design depicting a whaling scene.

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

The lively colored wash drawing at left, made by José Cardero, illustrates an actual occurrence at Mulgrave Sound. One of the Tlingits had stolen a pair of breeches from a sailor, and in reprisal the Spaniards stopped all trade. In the drawing the Mulgrave chief, returning the offending trousers, extends his arms in a gesture of peace.

had gained in two decades of operations. To the north lay the youthful colony of Upper California, founded in 1769, and beyond was the newly-born Spanish bastion of Santa Cruz de Nootka, established as a result of Spanish fear of English pretentions to the area.

Beyond Nootka in a maze of coastal islands and fog-shrouded bays might well be found the elusive Northwest Passage, known to the Spaniards variously as the Strait of Anián, or the Strait of Ferrer Maldonado, Juan de Fuca, or Bartolomé Fonte. Positive geographical information about any of those legendary watercourses would bring recognition to the discoverer and potential geopolitical advantage to his nation. European geographers, cartographers, and scientists were eager to fill in some of the last blank spaces on the *mappa mundi*. Thus, Minister of Marine Valdés ordered Malaspina to seek the western entrance to the fabled strait believed to lead from the North Sea to the South Sea—the Atlantic to the Pacific.

As a man of science, Malaspina subscribed to a new and more satisfactory method of achieving sovereignty, which he hoped to effect on this northern visit. Ever since the Columbian discovery of America, Spain and other European powers had performed repeated and colorful symbolic acts of possession. Most included medieval rituals, military displays, and physical acts of corporal control. Permanent markers were erected; a written testimony of possession duly executed, signed, and dated; and a notarized copy sealed in a bottle and left buried at the scene for future reference. Malaspina, however, intended to take possession by a "scientific method"—that of making a good map and publishing the results of the discovery, accompanied by the abbreviated symbolic act of erecting a small landmark and sealing a coin in a bottle for dating purposes. This new system would enhance Spanish prestige, contribute to geographical knowledge, and do away with earlier Spanish secrecy concerning discoveries.

Malaspina, forewarned of the navigational difficulties ahead, kept well out to sea until he reached his northing, then headed for land which he struck just below sixty degrees north latitude. It was late June 1791 when the Spanish explorers recognized Mulgrave Sound, so called by English explorer George Dixon and today known as Yakutat Bay in Alaska. Easy entry was effected, and local Tlingit Indians came out in two canoes to welcome the visitors. The chief of Mulgrave was at his ceremonial best, and the scientists were soon busy recording details of local culture and seeking the best anchorage for the mundane operations of taking on water, wood, and ballast. Scientific observation was slowed by a linguistic barrier overcome in some measure by sign language.

More important for the permanent record was the expedition's interest in artifacts. Through trade the visitors started a nonsystematic collection of Pacific Northwest Coast material culture items, which they added to later at Nootka. Preserved with care and consisting largely of

ATTRIBUTED TO JOSE CARDERO

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

Above: From Mulgrave Sound, the Malaspina expedition followed the coast southeast some nine hundred miles to Nootka Sound, where the Spanish had established a settlement two years earlier in order to forestall British claims to the area. Partially hidden behind the anchored vessel in the drawing above are the two tents used by Malaspina and expedition officers for scientific experiments during their two-week stay at Nootka. Nearby are the log buildings of Nootka's Spanish residents. The flag-topped battery of San Miguel appears in the left foreground, overlooking the anchorage; on the right is a Nootka war canoe with its distinctive carved-eagle prow.

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artifacts of minimum perishability, several dozen Tlingit items remain today in an excellent state of preservation.

During a ten-day stay at Mulgrave Sound the scientific explorers ran the gamut of their interests. A map was drawn with cartographical skill by Felipe Bauzá, while the artists made a series of drawings, many of which form part of today's traveling exhibit. An early observation of the nearby Mount Saint Elias resulted in an estimate of its nearly 17,000-foot summit; Malaspina's calculation was only 112 feet off. A visit was made to the native burial place, where José Cardero sketched his impressions.

While at Mulgrave Sound, Malaspina and a small detachment braved the open sea in longboats to explore an inlet to the north, today called Icy Bay, which they hoped would lead to the greatly desired strait. Though the strait eluded them, they did discover at the head of the inlet a huge glacier which today bears the name of the expedition commander—Malaspina Glacier. Foiled in their intent to find the strait, the party took possession in the name of King Carlos IV, naming the port *Desengaño* ("Disillusionment").

Ashore at Mulgrave the scientists carried out a series of astronomical observations and lengthy experiments involving the simple pendulum. At various places, utilizing modern methodology, the navigational staff took meridian transits, lunar distances, and star sights to establish their exact geographical position. The pendulum experiments were in cooperation with French and other European scientists who were working to establish the metric system. At the time it was thought that the basic metric unit would be the length of a pendulum which consumed one second in oscillation at forty-five degrees latitude. Malaspina and his officers spent hours in small portable tents carrying out these pendulum experiments. Two such observatory tents were used and can be seen in some of the expedition illustrations. The tents have not survived, but some of the nautical instruments utilized during the voyage still remain a part of the Malaspina collection (pages 10-11).

LEAVING MULGRAVE SOUND for Nootka Sound, some 900 miles to the southeast, the Spaniards ran as close to the coast as the weather permitted, allowing some op-

MUSEO DE AMERICA, MADRID

Above: This interesting watercolor indicates that while relations between the Spaniards and Chief Maquinna of Nootka were sometimes strained, mutual suspicions could be put aside for a celebration. Here Spanish mariners are shown joining in the elaborate festivities for Chief Maquinna's daughter Apenás, who had just attained puberty. The Spanish carefully made notes on the occasion, in which the young, richly dressed princess, amid great pomp and ceremony, received the adult name Istocoti-Clamoc. Among the games played during the celebration was the contest pictured above, in which a group of young men fought for possession of a small stick thrown from the platform above them; the winner received a shell as a prize.

portunity for Chief of Maps Bauzá to make a series of coastal profiles of places to which he gave Spanish names. Such profiles were regularly made by the group as an aid to future navigators, and though these particular toponyms did not stick, numerous other Hispanic place names did of course take permanent hold along the coast.

Spain already had a small settlement at Nootka, nestled in Friendly Cove where it was sheltered from the prevailing winds and protected by the battery of San Miguel overlooking the anchorage. Nootka was a whaling area, and the Indians of the region were justly proud of their maritime-oriented culture. Yet the rude shock of European intrusion into Pacific Northwest native life had changed the Nootkans' perceptions of the world since the day in 1774 when Juan Peréz out of San Blas had jolted them by his sudden appearance. Other visitors followed, and Nootka became an unlikely but important port of call for vessels of various nations. Maquinna, the principal chief, became a figure known far beyond the narrow confines of his former domain, and yet the new diplomacy of dealing with strangers proved difficult for the crafty yet unsophisticated native leader. As the once vibrant and confident Maquinna was alternately threatened, regaled, cajoled, and extolled, usually without understanding exactly why, he became fearful and aloof. Thus, Malaspina's mission in dealing with the Nootka leader was to reestablish friendship and win Maquinna back to dependence on Spaniards. The Nootka chief was Spain's diplomatic ace in the hole, for it was he who could testify to the primacy of Spain's appearance at Nootka, to the fact that the Mallorcan mariner Pérez had been there before James Cook of Britain. These were important points in Spain's argument concerning what the Iberians claimed as rights of exclusive sovereignty. Indeed, Malaspina was temporarily successful in getting Maquinna to resume friendly visits to the Spanish village and to provide fish for the garrison; while the expedition was there, his portrait was drawn by Tomás Suría (page 13).

Spanish scientific pursuits continued unabated at Nootka. Operations were facilitated by the fact that the Spaniards already established for two years on that rainy coast could

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE OAKLAND MUSEUM

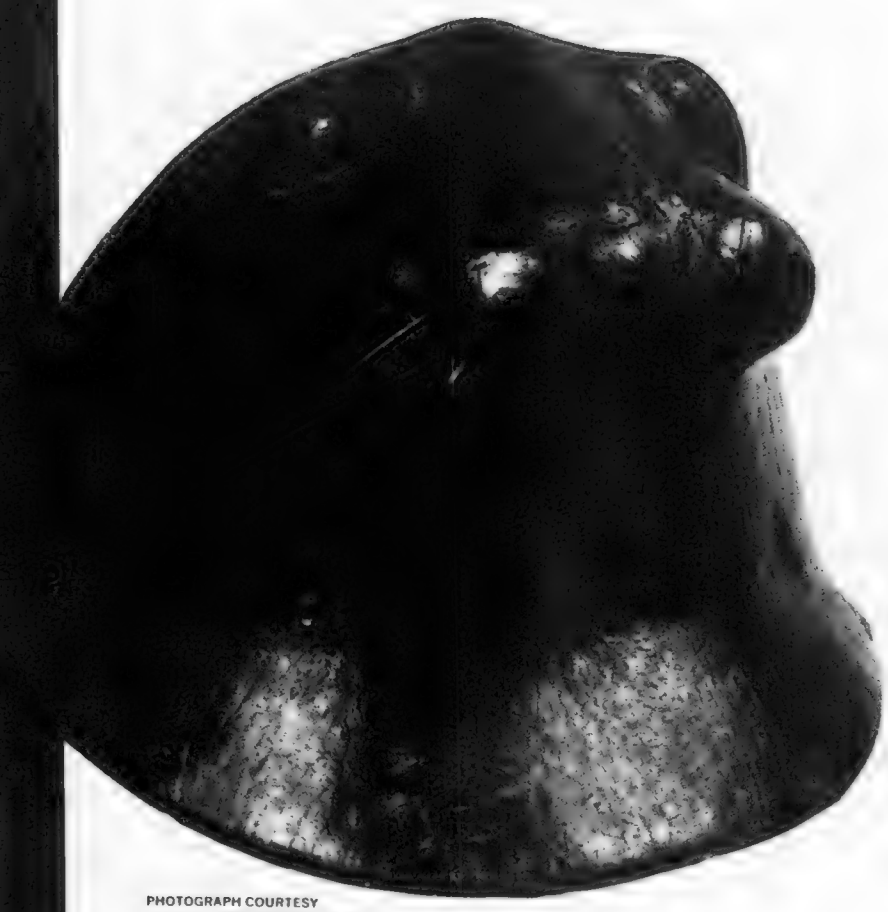
Masterpieces of the Carver's Art

Malaspina's scientists collected superb Pacific Northwest wood carvings, some among the oldest documented examples of their type known today. But over the years the collection was dispersed and neglected, though the objects themselves remained in surprisingly good condition; today they await more definitive study by experts in Pacific Coast Indian culture.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

The carved wooden mask above (like the others on these pages, from the collection of the Museo de América in Madrid) is painted in red, ochre, black, white, and blue. A curious leather flap and wooden ball are attached to the lower lip. The helmet below, intended for use in battle, is decorated with inlaid fish teeth in the mouth and neck and tufts of human hair in the crown.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY
OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

Seal headpieces like the one above were worn by hunters when stalking seals. The two-mouthed figure below, a frontal piece for a headdress, contains metal pupils in the eyes and sheet copper overlays on the arms and ears. The small mask at left, also a headdress frontal piece, depicts a woman's face with the lower lip enlarged by a labret.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY
OF THE OAKLAND MUSEUM

answer questions about the region, aid in collecting specimens, and provide other needed services. Speed was essential, for the season was already well advanced, and the parties detached for exploration in Mexico were waiting the expedition's return.

Following the coast southward, the explorers called next at Monterey, capital of Upper California and hub of activity of that frontier province. Though scientific curiosity continued strong, rest and recreation were also important after the inclemencies of the north and in view of the tropical navigation ahead. Local Californios, led by Father President Fermín Francisco de Lasuén of the eleven-mission Franciscan chain, outdid themselves in hospitality. One of the great extant collections forming part of the current Malaspina exhibit resulted from a quick request by that Basque priest that his colleagues of the Santa Barbara channel send north a collection of native handiwork. And such a collection it was! During the last decade and certainly since the writing of my study *Malaspina in California* (San Francisco, 1960), fourteen excellently preserved California baskets have turned up in the rich collections of the Museo de América. A generous sample of these skillfully woven trays, storage baskets, and bowl-shaped containers form part of the expedition materials recently returned to their area of origin for modern appreciation of the weaving skill of eighteenth-century California natives. Among these, in notably good condition, are probably the oldest Chumash baskets extant. (An example from this collection appears on page 6.)

Though the fortnight spent at Monterey was not essential to the purposes of the Malaspina expedition, it does provide today's viewer of the traveling exhibit with an opportunity to see California in its infancy as a Spanish colony. Stripped of the veneer of romantic association of the days of the dons, California is left as it was—a struggling, isolated outpost at the edge of civilization. As such it was of interest, and the artist José Cardero was especially busy drawing in color and in pen and ink zoological and ethnographic pictures of great value.

Botanical science was enhanced by Haenke, who became the scientific discoverer of the California redwood. His specimens were later planted above Granada's Alhambra, where they passed for ancient cedars until more recently identified as *Sequoia sempervirens*. Botanizing with his accustomed enthusiasm, Haenke discovered more than 250 other West Coast plants, many of which are described scientifically in *Reliquiae Haenkeanae*, a two-volume work published in Prague. The first scientific botanical descriptions of the coast live oak and the white oak were made by expedition gardener/botanist Luis Née from branches cut in California, though Née himself did not make the northern excursion. Published later in England, these descriptions gave rise to the Latin names of *Quercus agrifolia Née* and *Quercus lobata Née* for these California trees.

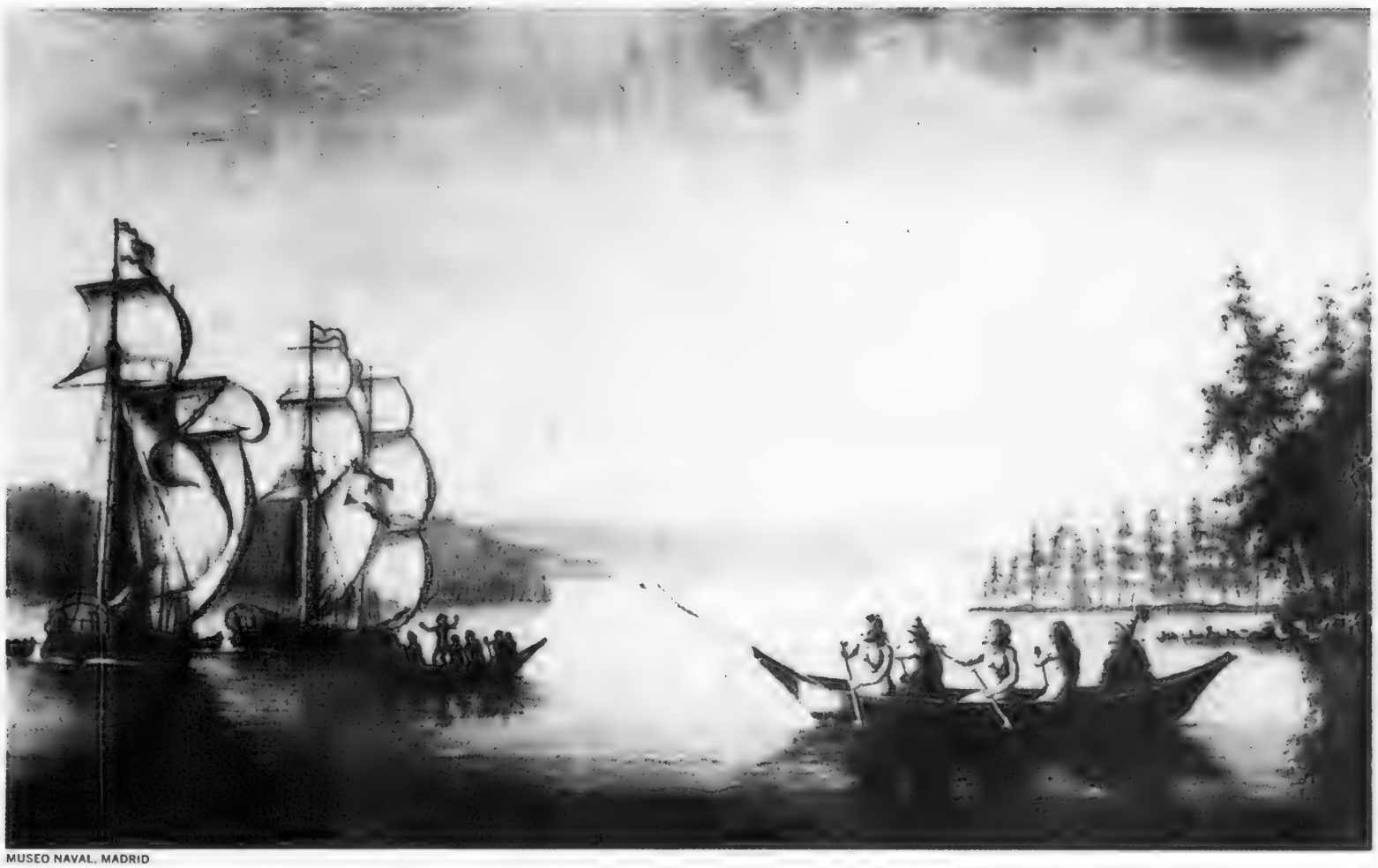
"MODO DE PELEAR DE LOS INDIOS DE CALIFORNIAS"

MUSEO NAVAL, MADRID PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

Above: Leaving Nootka and the North Pacific Coast in late August 1791, the Malaspina expedition sailed south to Monterey, capital of Upper California. There the explorers rested in preparation for the long trans-Pacific voyage ahead, but they also observed native flora and fauna and added an important group of Chumash baskets to their collection of native artifacts. Expedition artists also kept busy recording the daily life of the small Spanish outpost. In this finely detailed pencil sketch, probably by José Cardero, a buckskin-clad dragoon is shown in combat with a small group of Indians. The drawing is the first known illustration of the California soldier in action.

AFTER MALASPINA'S DEPARTURE from California on September 26, 1791, he returned to Acapulco to fit out for his projected visit to Oceania and the Orient. At the same time, realizing that insufficient attention had been given to the Vancouver Island area, the Spanish captain detached four of his officers and his unofficial artist on a last Spanish search for the Northwest Passage. Thus, the following summer, Dionisio Alcalá-Galiano and Cayetano Valdés headed north as commanding officers of the two shallow draft Mexican-built sloops *Sutil* and *Mexicana*. Little José Cardero accompanied the party as scribe, artist, pilot, and mapmaker. Focal point of activity was the labyrinth of waterways and islands forming the Inland Passage between Vancouver and the mainland. As an integral part of the larger Malaspina expedition, the 1792 Northwest Coast cruise achieved the distinction of being the first to circumnavigate Vancouver Island. Cardero's assignment resulted in an additional archive of Pacific Northwest art, much of which can be distinguished from drawings of the earlier northern excursion by the presence of the pair of two-masted vessels (as on the opposite page), rather than the three masts of the corvettes.

Meanwhile, the main group embarked in the *Descubierta* and *Atrevida* continued on to Guam, the Philippines, Macao, New Zealand, Australia, and the Friendly Islands. It did not circumnavigate the globe as earlier intended, however, but recrossed the Pacific eastward, revisiting South America before returning to Cadiz to complete the sixty-two-month voyage. Appropriate recognition was accorded all hands, and plans were laid for an extensive publication of results. But destiny decreed otherwise. Malaspina, who had guided his vessels through uncharted waters in one of the world's great maritime adventures, was soon to run afoul of court intrigue in a Spain fearful of Napoleon and ruled by an unlikely trio—Carlos IV; his wife, María Luisa de Parma; and her lover, Chief of State Manuel Godoy. A plot was uncovered linking Malaspina with a group trying to undermine and replace Godoy. The details are still hazy, but the result was clear. Malaspina was found guilty and imprisoned for eight years at La Coruña, followed by banishment to Italy, his native land. There in 1810 at age



MUSEO NAVAL, MADRID

Above: Still hopeful of finding the illusive Northwest Passage, Malaspina arranged for some officers and men from his own expedition to return north in the summer of 1792 for a second look at the Vancouver Island region. In this drawing, probably again by José Cardero who accompanied this second northern foray, the group's twin sloops, Sutil *and* Mexicana, *are shown in a meeting with natives in dugouts. While this subexpedition did not find the Northwest Passage, they did become the first to circumnavigate Vancouver Island.*

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fifty-five in the town of Pontremoli, Malaspina died in obscurity. The fruits of his expedition—copious notes, collections, maps, diaries, specimens, and artistic efforts—were scattered. Even in the publication of the *Relación del Viaje hecho por las Goletas Sutil y Mexicana,* it was ordered that Malaspina's name be omitted. Instead the phrase "commander of the expedition" was used.

The famous Baron Alexander von Humboldt in writing about Malaspina asserted that "this able navigator is more famous for his misfortunes than for his discoveries." The present Malaspina exhibit, organized and initiated at the Museum of New Mexico and recently shown at the Los Angeles County Museum, the Colorado State University Museum, the Oregon Historical Society, the Oakland Museum, and currently at the Smithsonian Institution as a belated Bicentennial contribution by Spain in honor of U.S. independence, does much to reestablish Malaspina. Previously, only a single massive tome, written by Pedro Novo y Colson in 1885, was dedicated to the entire expedition. Now, however, two recent exhibit catalogs, one by the Museum of New Mexico, *The Malaspina Expedition: In the Pursuit of Knowledge . . .* , and the other by the Oregon Historical Society, *Voyages of Enlightenment: Malaspina on the Northwest Coast, 1791/1792*, provide glimpses of both the methods and the productivity of the Spanish leadership that guided the round-the-world travelers on their mission for science and national glory. The effect of the present joint effort of U.S. and Spanish museums is to rescue Spain's great contribution from the oblivion which has enveloped Malaspina and company for centuries. At last this expedition in the grand tradition of Captain James Cook has achieved the recognition it so richly deserves. **AW**

Donald C. Cutter, *professor of history at the University of New Mexico and acting editor of the* New Mexico Historical Review, *was instrumental in bringing the current Malaspina exhibition to the United States. His publications include* Malaspina in California *(1960),* The Diary of Ensign Gabriel Moraga's Expedition of Discovery in the Sacramento Valley, 1808 *(1957), and* The California Coast: Documents from the Sutro Collection *(1969).*

The Malaspina catalogs noted above are respectively available from the Museum of New Mexico Press, P.O. Box 2087, Santa Fe, NM 87503 ($2 prepaid) and from the Oregon Historical Society, 1230 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205 ($3.70 prepaid).

George Catlin's INDIAN GALLERY

by Royal B. Hassrick

GEORGE CATLIN'S "Indian Gallery" was an amazing accomplishment, just as George Catlin himself was an amazing man. Painter, author, ethnographer, historian, traveler, and showman, he was an individual of many and varied talents. Moreover, he was determined, courageous, and, for his time, compassionately farsighted in his appreciation of Indians and their culture.

Born on July 26, 1796, in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, then on the edge of the frontier, Catlin grew up with a love of fishing and hunting and little attachment to his school books. He also enjoyed "occasional dabblings with the brush, which had secured already a corner in my affections."

Sixteen years before Catlin was born, his mother at age seven had been captured by Indians during the Wyoming (Pennsylvania) Massacre of 1778, but returned unharmed. During his childhood, Catlin loved to hear stories of the Indian way of life and to search for arrowheads and Indian relics; he also became friends with an Iroquois warrior living in the area.

However, when it came time to choose a career, his father, an attorney, persuaded Catlin to enter the field of law. After reading for two years under the supervision of Reeve and Gould in Litchfield, Connecticut, Catlin set up practice in Lucerne, Pennsylvania. But two or three years were more than enough. He sold his law books, bought brushes and paint pots with the proceeds, moved to Philadelphia, and set out to be a painter.

Without a teacher or even an advisor, Catlin still had fair success as a painter of portraits, especially miniatures. Moving in the circle of such recognized artists as Charles Willson Peale, Rembrandt Peale, and Thomas Sully, he was surely influenced by them, particularly Sully. By 1824, when he was twenty-eight years old, Catlin was an able enough painter to be elected to the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Four years later, he exhibited twelve of his paintings at the American Academy of Fine Arts. Catlin had arrived.

But he was restless, "continually reaching for some branch or enterprise of the art, on which to devote a whole lifetime of enthusiasm." It took a delegation of Indians, passing through Philadelphia on their way to Washington, to crystallize his musings. Proud and stoic, arrayed in dramatic costumes, plumed bonnets, and carrying shields, they paraded around the city to the astonishment and admiration of everyone. Catlin was entranced. Then, after long and deep pondering, he had an inspiration, an idea to which he could dedicate his life:

"Black and blue cloth and civilization are destined, not only to veil, but to obliterate the grace and beauty of Nature. Man, in the simplicity and loftiness of his nature, unrestrained and unfettered by the disguises of art, is surely the most beautiful model for the painter—and the country from which he hails is unquestionably the best study or school of the arts in the world: such I am sure, from the models I have seen, is the wilderness of North America. And the history and customs of such a people, preserved by pictorial illustrations, are themes worthy of the lifetime of one man, and nothing short of the loss of my life, shall prevent me from visiting their country, and becoming their historian."

Now Catlin had a project, but he had more than that. Without quite realizing it, by planning a pictorial record of the American Indians, he was preparing a taxonomic classification, much as John James Audubon was doing for

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This article is excerpted with permission from Royal B. Hassrick's The George Catlin Book of American Indians, *just released by Watson-Guptill Publications, New York. Published in 1977; all rights reserved. The accompanying Catlin paintings, also selected from the book, are reproduced here by permission of the National Collection of Fine Arts and the National Portrait Gallery, both located in Washington, D.C.*

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

BUFFALO BULL'S BACK FAT

Blackfeet · 1832

The name of this head chief of the Blackfeet refers to the buffalo's hump, the most delicious part of the animal's flesh.

BLACK HAWK
Sac and Fox · 1832

Leader of a fateful attempt to drive the whites from his Illinois homeland in 1832, Black Hawk was defeated and taken prisoner.

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

PIGEON'S EGG HEAD (THE LIGHT)

Assiniboine · 1831

A distinguished warrior and son of a chief, he was part of an Indian delegation sent to Washington and New York in 1831.

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

TCHOW-EE-PUT-O-KAW

Creek · 1836

Although this woman wears native dress, her tribe had by the time of Catlin's visit adopted many white customs.

American bird life, in the truly scientific vogue of the day. Moreover, by becoming the Indians' historian, Catlin was to be one of the nation's pioneer anthropologists.

CATLIN'S PLANS were met with skepticism. When he informed his friends, they outlined every obstacle and danger. But Catlin was not easily discouraged. Undaunted and in high spirits he left civilization for what was the "Far West" in 1830. Equipped with paints, palette, canvas, and easel, he set out on an "arduous and perilous undertaking with the determination of reaching ultimately, every tribe of Indians on the Continent of North America, and of bringing home faithful portraits of their principal personages, both men and women, from each tribe, views of their villages, games, etc., and full notes on their character and history. I designed, also, to procure their costumes, and a complete collection of their manufactures and weapons, and to perpetuate them in a *Gallery unique,* for the use and instruction of future ages." Catlin had a dream, and he felt driven by time. The fast-vanishing native peoples must be recorded and rescued from oblivion.

Reaching Saint Louis, he sought the aid of William Clark of the famed Lewis and Clark Expedition, now superintendent of Indian affairs. Clark not only was helpful, but he also invited Catlin to accompany him up the Mississippi to Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien. Treaties were being held with various tribes—the Sioux, Missouri, Omaha, Iowa, and the allied Sac and Fox. Here was a golden chance for Catlin to capture portraits. Then, in the fall of 1830, Catlin painted Northeastern Woodland Indians who had been removed by the government to what is now Kansas. There, near Fort Leavenworth, he found, among others, Shawness, Delawares, Kickapoos, and Potawatomis. Later that same year, Clark visited the Kansas Indians, and Catlin may have gone along. Also at Leavenworth Catlin painted representatives of Missouri and Platte River tribes: Otoes, Missouris, Omahas, and Pawnees.

Sometime in 1831, while Catlin was in Saint Louis, a group of four Indians appeared as delegates. Representatives of the Plains Cree, Plains Ojibwa, and Yanktonais Sioux arrived. Catlin missed no opportunities. He painted them all.

The year 1832, however, brought Catlin his grand opportunity. In the spring he arranged a trip aboard the steamboat *Yellowstone* up the Missouri to the American Fur Company's Fort Union, 2,000 miles away at the mouth of the Yellowstone River. Stopping at Fort Pierre, in what is now South Dakota, he painted Teton Sioux Indians and two visiting Cheyennes. At this time, he may also have got the portrait of a Nez Percé and a Flathead dressed in Sioux costumes upon their return from Saint Louis, the remnants of a larger group of Plateau Indians who were seeking the truth of the claims made by missionaries.

Farther up the river, Catlin sketched the Arikara villages from the steamboat. Because of past injustices, this tribe was too antagonistic toward the white traders for anyone to dare visit them.

Upon reaching Fort Union, Catlin reveled in what he beheld: the "Noble Savage," unspoiled in his native haunts. Here Catlin painted Blackfeet and Crow Indians, among his most inspired works. Leaving the fort in a heavy and awkward "canoe of green timber," accompanied by two traders, Catlin floated down the river to reach the Mandan villages near Fort Clark in what is now North Dakota. Here he not only painted portraits, but remarkable scenes of ceremonies and village life. Catlin spent about two weeks among the Mandans and was deeply impressed.

The following year was spent completing his sketches; not until 1834 did Catlin venture to the field again. From Fort Gibson, Arkansas, he may have traveled to the Osage villages, but more likely he captured likenesses of tribesmen visiting the fort, since the nearest of their three towns was forty miles away.

Catlin's major field trip of the year, however, was to accompany the United States Dragoons, under the command of Colonel Henry Dodge, on an expeditionary foray up the Arkansas and Red rivers. This was the region of the Kiowas, Comanches, and Wichitas.

Upon arriving at the Comanche village, Catlin collected many portraits, together with scenes of camp life and horsemanship. While the trip was successful as a military show of force and eventually led to peace treaties, the expedition was marred by a fever which killed about 150 of the dragoons. Catlin himself suffered miserably and spent much time recuperating upon his return to Fort Gibson.

It was here that Catlin was able to paint Choctaw portraits, as well as the action of a Choctaw ball game. Cherokees and Creeks were also in the vicinity, and he added their portraits to his gallery.

The following year, 1835, Catlin went north to the Falls of Saint Anthony on the Mississippi and then traveled south to Fort Snelling. During this sojourn, he painted Ojibwa and Santee Sioux portraits.

In 1836, Catlin visited the famed Pipestone Quarry in what is now Minnesota. Here the Indians mined the red stone from which they fashioned their sacred pipes. Catlin sent samples of the stone to one of the leading mineralogists in the country, Dr. Charles Jackson of Boston, who pronounced it a "new mineral compound" and named it *catlinite* in honor of the artist. On this sojourn, Catlin collected more portraits, including likenesses of Winnebagos and Menominees.

The following year, 1837, Catlin traveled south to Fort Moultrie at Charleston, South Carolina. Here were imprisoned Seminole Indians captured in the long and costly Seminole War. Catlin painted several portraits, including that of the famous Osceola (page 28), one of Catlin's finest

Continued on page 29

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

MAH-TO-TOH-PA (FOUR BEARS)
Mandan · 1832

Possessing many noble qualities, Four Bears was considered by Catlin to be the most extraordinary Indian on the continent.

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

BIG ELK

Omaha · 1832

The black face paint worn by this noted warrior, chief of his tribe, symbolizes that he has just killed an enemy in battle.

OSCEOLA

Seminole · 1838

Though not a chief, Osceola was the most respected man in his tribe. This portrait is considered among Catlin's finest works.

studio portraits. The broken-hearted Osceola died shortly after this painting was completed.

By 1837, Catlin had just about completed his "Indian Gallery," some 507 portraits, genre paintings, and landscapes, all of which he listed in his 1840 catalog. However, since he numbered each portrait according to the number of sitters that appeared in it, each person receiving a number, there were actually only 422 paintings.

AS AN ARTIST, Catlin was essentially a documentary painter, concerned with facts rather than aesthetics. While he had a sense of the sublime and tried to impart it in his landscapes, perspective eluded him, his flat use of color is unimpressive, and his scenes miss the feeling of grandeur. As a portrait painter, however, he was at his best.

Catlin excelled at portraying the face. With sparingly smooth brushwork, he not only caught and modeled the facial characteristics of his subjects, but conveyed their pride and dignity. Consequently, his Indians became real people, recognizable as individuals, rather than the stock characters so common in paintings of "the red man."

But even his portraits are often erratic in quality. This inconsistency was largely due to the speed with which he had to work, for his time to paint was nearly always limited. On his trip to the Upper Missouri in 1832, he completed 135 pictures, an average of nearly two a day—and there were many days when he was on shipboard, unable to paint. Many of his portraits are sketches, some probably dashed off in a matter of minutes.

Luckily, as one wag put it, Catlin was the fastest brush in the West. His mastery of the quick impression saved him and brought his portraits to life. Although Sully's portraits have more "shimmer" in the flesh tones, some of Catlin's faces have quite a Sully-like feeling. Moreover, he captured the racial character of his Indian subjects, a feat few artists before or since have achieved so consistently. Working under pressure, Catlin was able to catch a vivid likeness. Many years later, Dr. Washington Mathews of the Smithsonian Institution showed Catlin's two volumes of *Letters*, containing colored line engravings, to descendants of some of Catlin's subjects. They readily recognized their relatives.

His finest works are his three-quarter figures. His full-length portraits, both standing and sitting, are often out of drawing. Sometimes the head is too large, sometimes too small. The hands are often grotesquely large, and he frequently had trouble with the arms and shoulders. Many of his figures are mere sketches, with attention given to the head alone. Undoubtedly, he was pressed for time, starting a picture in the field and intending to complete the rough draft at a later date. He did work over many of his paintings, finishing them in his studio. But perhaps he never had time to finish them all—or never intended to rework each one. He was certainly not reluctant to place the "unfinished" pictures in his catalog nor to exhibit them. He did, however, once write an apology to the effect that what some of his works might lack in artistic merit, they gained in historic value.

Catlin's attention to detail was also sporadic; and too often, he merely hastily hinted at it. At times, however, he was fairly meticulous, delineating beads, necklaces, ear ornaments, and decorations on clothing and headdresses with care and precision. The designs in the porcupine quills which embellished so many of the costumes, the pictographic painting on men's shirts and robes, as well as the geometric painting found on robes worn by women, were sometimes methodically rendered. Unfortunately some of his renderings of these designs were quite inaccurate.

His full-length portrait of the Mandan Mah-To-Toh-Pah (or Four Bears, illustrated on page 26) is a good example of his attention to detail. It has been noted that Catlin may have exaggerated the length of the shirt, for the actual garment, now in the collection of the United States National Museum in Washington, D.C., is considerably shorter than Catlin rendered it. But the Swiss artist Karl Bodmer painted Four Bears a year later, wearing a similar shirt of almost identical length (see Bodmer's portrait on the January/February 1977 cover of *The American West*). It is entirely possible that the shirt simply shrank, for it was part of a collection that later suffered two fires and water damage.

In his paintings of costumes, Catlin was faithful in his reproduction of color. Native Americans were limited in their use of colors to red ochre, charcoal black, and occasionally chalk white. When trade goods were introduced —bright textiles and glassy beads—the Indians were quick to attire themselves in these gaudy novelties. Catlin's ability to convey the colorful panoply is seen in his paintings of the Eastern Indians, who had already received such manufactured articles. Catlin's eye for color was sound; his rendering of flesh tones and the muted tans of tanned animal skins was correct.

Art critics are not the only authorities who have complained about Catlin's work. Anthropologists have levied charges of inaccuracy against him. Comparing his work with that of Karl Bodmer—the young Swiss artist who accompanied Maximilian, Prince of Wied, on a scientific expedition to the Upper Missouri in 1833—they find Catlin's lack of attention to detail disappointing. Academically trained in the European tradition, Bodmer's watercolors (and later his hand-colored engravings) are masterpieces of detail. Covering the same territory—and painting some of the same subjects as Catlin did the previous year—Bodmer's works are an ethnologist's dream come true. Minute elements of costume are portrayed with photographic clarity. Beads can be counted; design elements and porcupine quill work can be closely studied. His figures are never out of drawing, and his portraits are

Continued on page 33

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

HE WHO KILLS THE OSAGES

Missouri · 1832

This aged chief from a Platte River tribe holds an effigy pipe carved from red pipestone or catlinite (see text on page 25).

RED THING THAT TOUCHES IN MARCHING

Teton Sioux · 1832

The unmarried daughter of a chief, this young woman was much esteemed by her tribe for her beauty and modesty.

NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS

BRAVE CHIEF
Pawnee · 1832
The painted hands indicate hand-to-hand combat in which the wearer was victorious.

proud and stoic. On the other hand, too many of Bodmer's figures appear as lifeless as dummies in a wax museum. His Indians are caricatures of what he *thought* he was seeing—fierce, savage redskins. He never had Catlin's empathic ability to capture the Indians' very human qualities. Bodmer's Indians match the stereotype of the period; Catlin's are the genuine article, the real Indians.

TO BRING his "Indian Gallery" before the public, Catlin arranged for an exhibition in Pittsburgh as early as 1833. His collection was by no means complete; not until 1837 was a more comprehensive showing held in New York City at Clinton Hall. More exhibitions were held in various cities, including Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington.

Two years later, Catlin took his gallery, together with many items of Indian culture (altogether eight tons of it) to London. He took every conceivable article of Indian use—weapons, tools, costumes, and ceremonial items. In addition, there was a full-sized buffalo-hide tipi. At first, he dressed mannequins in the costumes. But Catlin was a showman, and he began to employ live Indians, who sang and danced and did pantomimes of battle and hunt scenes. His gallery and his show enthralled the people of England for nearly five years, while his learned lectures earned him a high place in the social circles of London. Wined and dined, he was a popular luminary of the time.

In 1845, at the invitation of King Louis Philippe, Catlin moved his gallery to the Louvre in Paris. Here the French received him with the same acclaim as had the British. Catlin, was, in fact, an early and vastly colorful combination of Barnum and Buffalo Bill.

In addition to his gallery and his early Wild West Show, Catlin devoted substantial energies to his writings. It was in 1841 that his *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians* was published. This two-volume work, reprinted several times, combined a travelog and anthropological observations. Telling of his adventures and of Indian life, it brought to the public one of the first detailed and illustrated descriptions of the Far West. Moreover, many of the ethnological descriptions are classic firsts in our knowledge of Indian culture.

Catlin wrote about the Indians with a heartfelt respect and compassion rare for his time: "From what I have seen of these people I feel authorized to say, that there is nothing very strange or unaccountable in their character, but that it is a simple one, and easy to be learned or understood. . . . And I trust that the reader, who looks through these volumes with care, will be disposed to join me in the conclusion: that the North American Indian in his native state is an honest, hospitable, faithful, brave, warlike, cruel, revengeful, relentless—yet honourable, contemplative and religious being."

While Catlin's travels had been all for the purpose of achieving his main goal—painting Indians and preserving their history—his *Letters and Notes* was also filled with tales of narrow escapes, dangerous hunting escapades, arduous trips, as well as marvelous descriptions of the natural wonders and the wildlife he had encountered. The volumes were illustrated with colored plates, most of them little line drawings copied from the paintings in his gallery and rendered with more clarity of detail and spontaneity of action than the original oils. This is particularly true of the scenes of village life, buffalo hunts, and landscapes.

Artist, author, and showman that he was, Catlin was not fortunate with his money. His last year in London, 1848, found him in financial difficulties. Attendance at his exhibition was falling off, and he was in debt. It was after several of his belongings were put on the auction block to satisfy his creditors that a wealthy Philadelphian, Joseph Harrison, saved Catlin from ruin by paying off his obligations and taking over the Indian Gallery.

Despite his financial problems, Catlin continued to write and paint. In 1851 he was reduced to accepting a commission to make fifty-six copies of his original portraits at $2 each for Sir Thomas Phillips. From 1853 to 1858 he engaged in various extensive tours of South America, the Pacific Northwest, the Rocky Mountains, California, and the desert Southwest. In 1860 he began feverishly copying his works on cardboard and adding paintings of his trips to South America and the Pacific Northwest. His hope was to sell his collection to the government, but this hope was unfulfilled. Impoverished, he died on December 28, 1872, in Jersey City, New Jersey, at the age of seventy-five.

The owner of Catlin's Gallery, Joseph Harrison, had also died, but his widow retained the collection. In 1879 Thomas Donaldson heard of its whereabouts and, together with the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, inspected it. It was Donaldson who urged Mrs. Harrison to donate the collection, and she graciously agreed. Thanks to her generosity, Catlin's Indian Gallery now hangs in the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C.

Altogether Catlin painted representatives of fifty-five tribes comprising about two-thirds of the number residing in what was then the United States and its territories. And to accomplish this he traveled widely throughout Indian country, particularly west of the Mississippi River, where the Indians were still living in their native state. As a result Catlin produced the largest and most comprehensive record of the American West the nation had ever seen. This prodigious accomplishment is not only a tribute to his dedication but an inestimable contribution to the nation's understanding of the Native American's heritage. **AW**

Royal B. Hassrick *of Franktown, Colorado, is commissioner of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board for the U.S. Department of the Interior and was formerly with the Denver Art Museum. He is author of* Sioux: Life and Customs of a Warrior Society; I & Tex; Cowboys; Indians; *and* Western Painting Today.

An interview with Wallace Stegner

by Forrest G. and Margaret G. Robinson

WALLACE STEGNER'S first major publication, *Remembering Laughter,* appeared in 1937. It won the Little, Brown novelette prize, and it was praised by one reviewer for coming "startlingly close to perfection." In the forty years since, Stegner has more than made good on the great promise of that first literary venture. Ignoring, as we must, hundreds of articles, short stories, reviews, introductions, and the like, we are left with ten additional novels, two collections of short fiction, two biographies (of John Wesley Powell and Bernard DeVoto), two studies of the Mormons, a collection of critical essays, and two volumes of commentary and personal reflection on the American West. Critical acclaim and public recognition have not been wanting. Again ignoring numerous honors and awards, the highlights of Stegner's career have included election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Pulitzer Prize (for *Angle of Repose*) in 1972, and most recently, the National Book Award for *The Spectator Bird* (1976).

During intervals away from the typewriter, Stegner has been extraordinarily active and productive. After several summers on the staff of the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference (where he formed friendships with Robert Frost and Bernard DeVoto) and five years teaching in the Harvard creative writing program, Stegner accepted a professorship at Stanford in 1945. During the twenty-six years before his retirement in 1971, the now famous Stanford Writing Program developed and flourished under Stegner's steady hand. From 1966–68 he was also editor-in-chief of *The American West.* Meanwhile, there has been time as well for extensive travel, and for service as assistant to the secretary of the interior in developing the National Parks Bill and as a member of the National Parks Advisory Board.

Stegner's first contribution of really major significance and demonstrated permanence, *The Big Rock Candy Mountain,* appeared in 1943. "Family history reasonably straight," as Stegner has characterized it, this autobiographical *bildungsroman* is rooted in memories of childhood on the raw Saskatchewan frontier, adolescence and the first glimpses of civilization in Salt Lake City, and the gradual emergence of the young adult and future artist. Contemporary critics quite properly emphasized the spaciousness of the novel, its plentitude of apt detail, and its full evocation of regional life. Through Bruce Mason, his *alter ego* in *The Big Rock Candy Mountain,* Stegner locates himself, both personally and as an artist, in the arid expanses of the intermountain West. But the discovery of home is hardly a threshold on peace of mind. For Bruce's region, with most of the American West, is the site of unresolved tensions between the forces of ignorance, individualism, exploitation, and violence on one side, and culture, cooperation, prudence, and peace on the other. At the social and historical level, the novel dramatizes these tensions in the contrast between the orderly community of Mormons and the rapacity of individualistic Gentiles. Much closer to home, Bruce finds a mirror image of regional conflict in the uneasy union of his harsh, shiftless father and his gentle, nurturing mother. How, he wonders, will these virtually identical patterns of regional and familial tension work to influence his own future? "Perhaps it took several generations to make a man, perhaps it took several combinations and re-creations of his mother's gentleness and resilience, his father's enormous energy and appetite for the new, a subtle blending of masculine and feminine, selfish and selfless, stubborn and yielding, before a proper man could be fashioned."

The formulation of answers to Bruce's searching question has been a central preoccupation of Stegner's long career. In the regional perspective, this enterprise has involved the search for human models adequate to the challenges and frequent disappointments of the western experience. The accomplishments of the Mormons—described by Stegner in *The Gathering of Zion* (1964) as "the most systematic, organized, disciplined . . . pioneers in our history"—provide one formula for success. Stegner's heroines, very often the spiritual descendants of Elsa Mason, Bruce's gentle and civilizing mother, provide an-

WALLACE STEGNER IN THE STUDY OF HIS LOS ALTOS HILLS, CALIFORNIA HOME

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEE FOSTER

other. The character most conspicuously missing in this gallery of regional types is the strong, prudent, reliable male—an alternative, in other words, to Bo Mason, the footloose father figure in *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*. The gap is filled by John Wesley Powell, the Colorado River explorer, dedicated government scientist, and sober realist about human possibilities in the arid region. Powell's exemplary career, set forth with appropriate energy and color in *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* (1954), provides the historical model of masculine responsibility for the heroes of Stegner's subsequent fictional works.

Not surprisingly, Powell's example also provided his biographer with a model for his own career. In this light we see that Stegner's lifework, no less than Powell's, forms an eloquent response to Bruce Mason's question. A "proper man," molded out of mingled and conflicted western materials, attempts—as Stegner has, quite successfully—to harness the best elements, the energy *and* the gentleness, of the divided regional past to the service of the present and future. Indeed, the very striking symmetry of Stegner's career is that his preoccupation with the discovery of positive continuities in the western experience—a theme recently and quite subtly reexplored in *Angle of Repose*—has been paralleled by his determination to nourish those same continuities in his life and work. In all of this he has shouldered a "cultural burden" which he once described as Willa Cather's: "the quintessentially American burden of remaking in terms of a new place everything that makes life graceful and civilized."

AMERICAN HISTORIANS *have brought strong feelings to the task of interpreting the western past. Most recently, these feelings have been strongly negative. Young historians tend to view western history as a chronicle of destruction—with Native Americans, other minority groups, and the western environment being the chief victims. Do you share this sense of the western past? What figures and features of western history should we look to in trying to shape a better future beyond the hundredth meridian?*

I would have to be mentally and morally obtuse not to see the history of the West as an uninterrupted raid against the earth and its riches and against the native peoples and their cultures. I imagine that so romantic a view of western history as that expressed by, say, Bernard DeVoto, would be impossible in 1977. Manifest Destiny has few advocates except in places like the Panama Canal Zone, and our for-

WALLACE STEGNER IN THE FOOTHILLS NEAR HIS HOME, NOVEMBER 1977

PHOTOGRAPH BY LEE FOSTER

merly ruthless attitudes toward Indians have been largely replaced by sentimental ones. We take the side of the underdog Indian; we no longer cheer when the Seventh Cavalry comes jingling down the Little Bighorn into the technicolor screen: we cheer when Crazy Horse and his riders come sweeping around the hill to engulf Custer's companies.

Nevertheless, we can't deny that history, and except for a little environmental sticking plaster and a few concessions to wronged tribes we can't reverse it. It's the only history we have, and I suppose we ought to admit it and learn from it—which means, of course, the rewriting of some of it. *Unthink* is unthinkable, but *rethink* is the beginning of wisdom.

What the rethinking and rewriting of western history would do to literature is a question. My guess is that in many cases it would simply reverse the good guys and the bad guys, and give us something about as romantic as what we have repudiated. My *hope* is that it might give us a few new heroes of a non-Kit Carson kind. John Wesley Powell, who knew the West as no man in his time did, and who cherished both the earth and the Indians, would look reasonably well on a pedestal. So would someone like Charlie Russell, who loved Indians and grassland and horses, and hated pioneers. Our true heroes ought to be the people who loved the West's wonder and space and mystery, and had no desire whatever to "tame" it. But I think we are unlikely to get away from the pioneers and the raids and the warfare. It is a lot easier to make drama of redskins biting the dust, or cavalrymen biting the dust, than of wisdom, patience, prescience, and reverence for the earth and its creatures.

That is the reason I have chosen not to make fiction out of the western past. I would just as soon give the western past a rest. Like the western earth, it needs a time to heal. Eventually, maybe, we can deal with it as I think it ought to be dealt with: as the profound tragic drama of a high-energy civilization investing and changing and nearly destroying a virgin continent that they passionately loved, that spoke to them like bugles. If you doubt that it did speak to them like bugles, remember that there are thousands of instances of white men who went Indian, but hardly a single one of Indians who went white.

The student of western literature has much to learn from a glance at the past decade's roster of Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winners. Of the twenty writers cited for fiction, you are among a group of four raised and still residing in the West. Obviously, the western experience is still relatively marginal for the major figures in contemporary American fiction. As a product of the West, and as its most prominent literary spokesman, how do you react to, and account for, this situation?

Let me deny at once that I am a "spokesman" for any region, tradition, or state of mind. I happen to be unable (and unwilling, I admit it) to write about anything but the things I know, and what I know best is the West. So my being a "western" writer is an inevitability, not a choice.

That said, I have to ask what the "western experience" is. To a considerable extent it has been the frontier experience delayed into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Later it was the experience of provincial (and economically colonialized) states vegetating along without much growth or change—a few people in an enormous

area adapting to the conditions imposed by climate and topography. In most parts of the West, what developed was an oasis civilization: we forget that for a long time the West—all the Wests—have been more urban than rural. But the towns and cities exist in such an expanse of unoccupied space that human beings have retained the dignity of rareness, and that, I suppose, is one of the most marked characteristics of western life. Much more recently, within the last decade, many parts of the West have been sharply altered by the discovery that they contain the bulk of the energy resources in the country—the oil, gas, oil shale, uranium, coal, and water-power sites without which the whole nation would have to slow its drive into the industrialized termite-life. Industrialization in the West has constraints (primarily of water) that do not apply elsewhere, and it necessarily develops next door to an anachronistic ruralism, or at least emptiness. The consequences of industrialization are therefore acute and sometimes brutal, as in the strip mining regions of Wyoming and Montana, and destructive to the assumptions and values that we have come to think of as peculiarly western.

Most of this is not yet a part of literature. The western cities have rarely appeared in fiction; there is no tradition of Denver or Salt Lake or Boise or Missoula, much less of the recent boomtowns. What *has* made it into literature is the frontier past, mostly mythic, and there we sit on dead center.

I don't blame New York or the centers of publication or "eastern" snobbery. They have no way of knowing about the West unless the people who do know about it will write about it. Nevertheless, this is where a lot of America's future and a lot of its immediate present lie. This is where the energy resources are. The fact that half of those energy resources are owned by Indians, and that the Indians have suddenly begun to sound and act like oil-owning Arabs, only compounds the situation. Western writers are going to have to deal with Indians again, and not as Tontos; and readers, editors, and critics across the rest of America are going to have to listen, because what they hear—if we ever get around to saying it—will matter to them.

By this roundabout route I finally arrive at an approximate answer to your question. Sure, western writers have been neglected; but sure, they have often asked to be neglected by failing to deal with the real life they ought to know.

As founder of the Stanford Writing Program, you spent nearly thirty years nurturing the future authors of California and the West. What were your central objectives in developing the program? And, with the major contemporary voices in western literature in mind, how successful were you in influencing fiction on the Pacific slope?

This is a question that calls for a careful but unequivocal answer. I did spend nearly thirty years nurturing, if that is the word, future writers, though by no means all of them were from California or the West. Some, like Larry McMurtry, Jim Houston, Ernest Gaines, and Scott Momaday, were westerners; others, like Sylvia Wilkinson and Hannah Green, were not. A good many became Californians after a year's fellowship taught them how well they liked the Bay Area.

Central objectives? Opportunity. That, and no more. A chance to write under the direction of somebody who knew something about writing and publishing, and with some meager degree of financial aid and help toward publication, and with a reasonable amount of exposure to the books and writers who make or reflect the character of our times. I grew up in the provinces, and knew how hungry a young writer can get for criticism, opportunity, and the company of his kind. Not everybody who came to Stanford needed that opportunity, for many of them came from New York and Boston and Chicago and other places where the company of their kind is a dime a dozen. But I suspect that a year on the West Coast was educative for most—not for all—and that the company they found among the handpicked young writers in the Stanford Writing Program was as good company, and as gifted, as they could have found at home. I never had any objection either to the enrichment of a regional center or the enlargement of easterners by bringing them into contact with it. I never thought of the Stanford Writing Program as provincial. Quite the contrary, it has been considerably cosmopolitan. What makes the provinces alert and aware is their feeling that they must understand and know the places that call themselves centers. What makes the centers so frequently provincial is their unawareness that any places besides themselves exist.

Now the cautious part of this response. I never set out to influence fiction on the Pacific slope, or indeed to *influence* fiction anywhere. I set out only to encourage and assist. I bent over backwards to avoid influencing. I did everything I could, which was not always enough, to discourage the formation of cliques and coteries within the Stanford group or in the larger group of writers who lived on its periphery. Consider that Larry McMurtry, Ken Kesey, Ernie Gaines, and Wendell Berry were all at Stanford at the same time. Any teacher who attempted to "influence" those four in any single direction or toward any uniformity of purpose or form or style, would be out of his mind. I have always been a little foolish, but I've never been out of my mind.

Since all we tried to do was encourage, and since encouragement has gone on for many years now, and since many Fellows brought in from elsewhere have chosen to stay on the West Coast, I sometimes have the feeling that the Stanford Writing Program has been most successful as a colonizing scheme. Northern California particularly is

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Louis J. Stellman's

by Richard H. Dillon

ARRIVING in California from his Baltimore birthplace in 1898, Louis J. Stellman succumbed to patriotic fever. A hunchback, he knew that he would never be able to serve his country in Cuba or the Philippines. So he threw himself into civilian war work. During the Spanish American War he became a telegrapher on Alcatraz, then an army post rather than a prison, and also at Fort Mason, San Francisco.

Meanwhile, Stellman fell in love with San Francisco. But he was not able to settle down in the city for another four years. In 1901 he was a telegraph operator in Los Angeles, where he also began a career in journalism.

After writing for the Los Angeles *Herald, Times,* and *Examiner,* Stellman returned to San Francisco the following year. There he rose from reporter to editor on both the *News* and the *Bulletin.* His feature stories, such as one in 1927 on Chinatown's tong wars, attracted much attention.

When Stellman married in 1904, the great Chinatown photographer Arnold Genthe took the wedding pictures. Genthe remained an acquaintance rather than a close friend, but soon Stellman himself was fooling around with a camera. Before long, he was offering lantern-slide lectures on art, San Francisco history—and Chinatown.

Like Genthe, Stellman was drawn to Chinatown's streets and alleys because they teemed with colorful and exotic life. Change in Chinatown was quickened by the devastating earthquake and fire of April 1906, as noted by both Genthe and Donaldina Cameron, the Presbyterian missionary who rescued many slave girls from forced prostitution in Chinatown. Miss Cameron stated: "Heaps of sand and colored ashes mark the once densely populated, gaily painted, and proverbially wicked haunts of highbinders and slave dealers. . . . The strange, mysterious old Chinatown is gone and never more will be."

But Stellman believed that Genthe and Miss Cameron were wrong in seeing the destruction, and the rebuilding of a new Chinatown, as forcing a clean break with the past. He was sure that the transition would be a much slower process than they imagined, and that it would continue for another decade or more. He was right. As he wrote: "A false impression prevails that Chinatown, as it existed before the fire of 1906, is extinct. My pictures alone will disprove this."

So it was that Stellman continued to haunt *Dai Fow* ("Big City" Chinatown) with his camera concealed under his coat, snapping candid pictures of the vibrant street life around him. When Genthe left for the East in 1911 and a new career as a high society portrait photographer, it was, ironically, in the most critical year in Chinatown history. The 1911 Chinese Revolution began to change Chinatown as much as China itself. Queues ("pigtails") were lopped off by their owners as a gesture of independence. Black pajamas, skull caps, and padded slippers were replaced by western fashions, from boots to fedoras. Bound feet became an embarrassing reminder of a past now deliberately obliterated as Young China faced the future. It was a fascinating period of flux, of conflicting tides of Western and Eastern thought and custom. And Stellman replaced Genthe as the main observer, recording the period for posterity.

Louis Stellman never became a photographer of the caliber of a Genthe or a Stieglitz. But neither did he succumb

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PHOTOGRAPHS ON THIS AND THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE FROM THE LOUIS J. STELLMAN COLLECTION AT THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY, SACRAMENTO

Sensing the cultural changes that were in the wind in San Francisco's postearthquake Chinatown, Louis Stellman was careful to photograph such vanishing traditions as the emergence of the Dancing Lion from his lair at the headquarters of the Six Companies, the powerful Chinese merchant association.

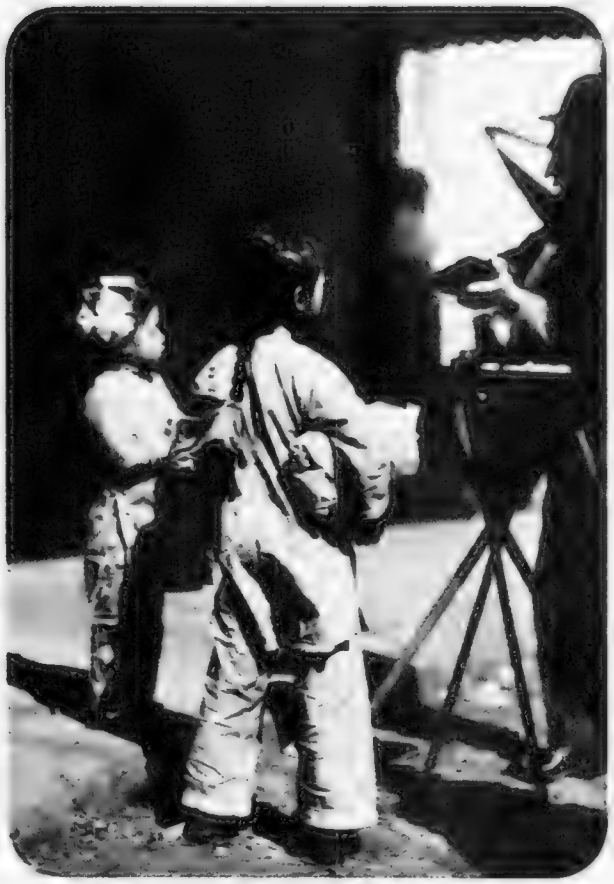
Chinatown could only have grown up in a great port city like San Francisco, facing the Pacific. There, human cargoes from Canton and Hong Kong were matched by manifests of such exotic foods as the fragrant pomelo, or Chinese grapefruit, and long canes of sugar from Hawaii's Hamakua Coast.

Buildings in Chinatown alleyways were often protected from evil spirits by fierce "door gods," Asian counterparts of London's vanished Gog and Magog.

Sixty-five years ago, as today, Dupont Gai *(Dupont Street, now Grant Avenue) was Broadway and Bund combined to Chinese-Americans. But Chinatown's side streets were just as full of life. Here mother and child, in mixed Western and Eastern dress, have flagged down a walrus-moustachioed, bowlered, Irish hackman on Washington Street.*

Indicative of the transitional phase in which Stellman found Chinatown was the reaction of subjects to his camera. There were some who were overtly hostile, but many more were merely suspicious or aloof, like this dignified oldster, taking his ease in a Dupont Gai *doorway.*

On the other hand, many of San Francisco's younger Chinese, like these two men at the counter of a combined tobacco and lottery shop, were "liberated" from the old superstition that the black box in the hands of a fahn kwei *("foreign devil") would steal one's soul.*



Many of Stellman's most charming portraits were made without his subjects' knowledge. Here he focuses on a parcel-carrying girl in rough work clothes, halted in mid-errand by a spellbinding street hawker.

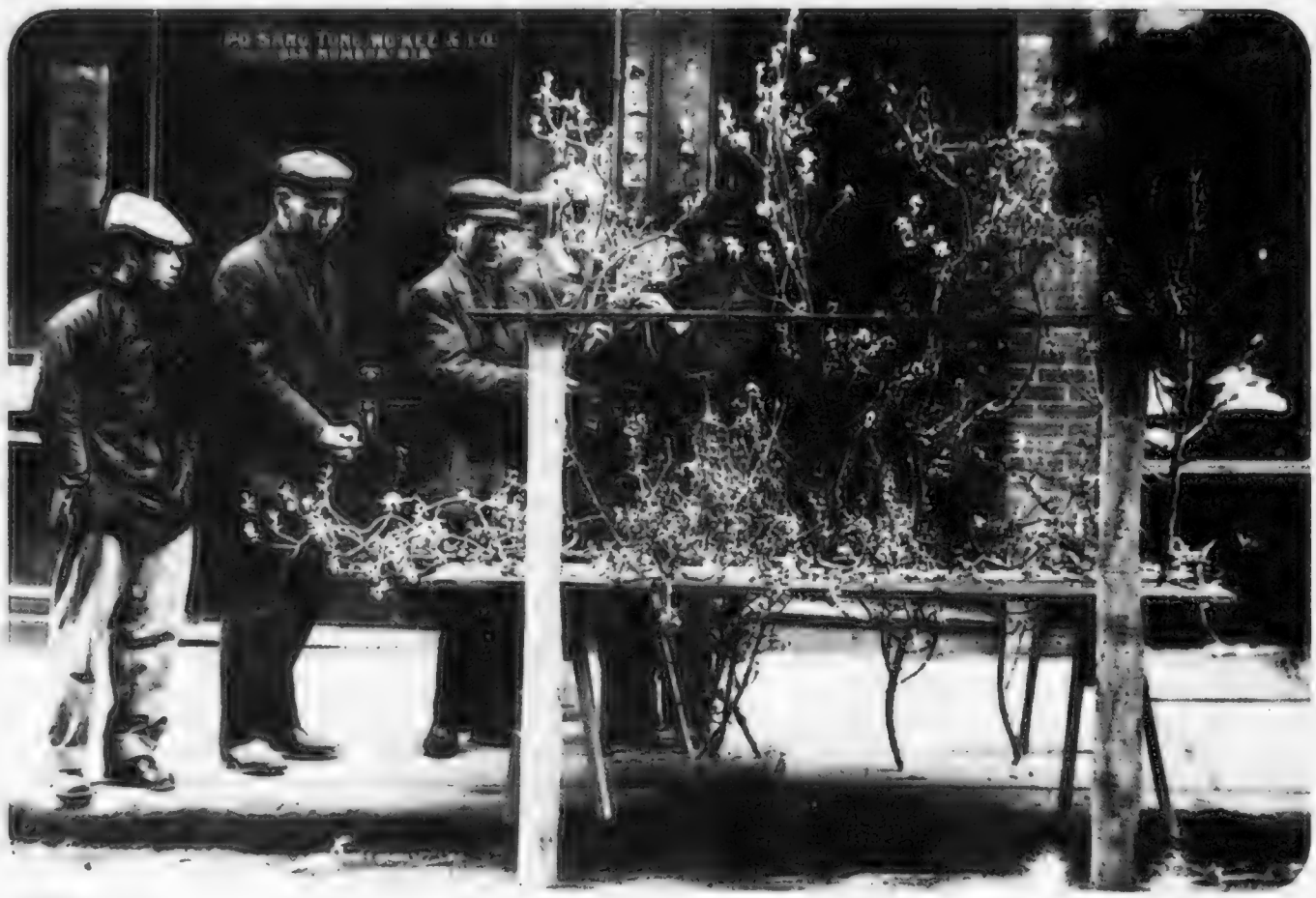
Stellman was always impressed by the tolerance—indeed respect—of youth for age, and vice versa, in oriental San Francisco. Here he captures a business transaction between a young customer and a well-dressed elderly vendor of herbs and seeds, dried insects, and beche de mer *or sea cucumbers.*

The Gaels and Teutons of the police department's Chinatown squad were viewed with ambivalence by law-abiding Sino-Americans. The cops were a mixed blessing—indeed, a necessary evil. As insensitive as so many bulls in a china shop, they nevertheless smashed the tong headquarters of the deadly highbinders.

There were class extremes in the Asian quarter as well as wide-verging cultural differences. Stellman's candid photograph below suggests some of the subterranean squalor that existed in the densely populated Chinatown of his era, where many were literally forced to live underground.

Well-to-do merchants such as these seldom walked the streets alone before the First World War. They were usually trailed by bodyguards, on the alert for the boo how doy, *or hatchet men, of the tong wars.*

San Francisco was Dai Fow *("Big City"), but it was nevertheless the scene of such outdoor hobbies as rooftop kite flying—until the profusion of tall buildings and overhead power lines with the consequent threat of fire caused the custom to disappear.*



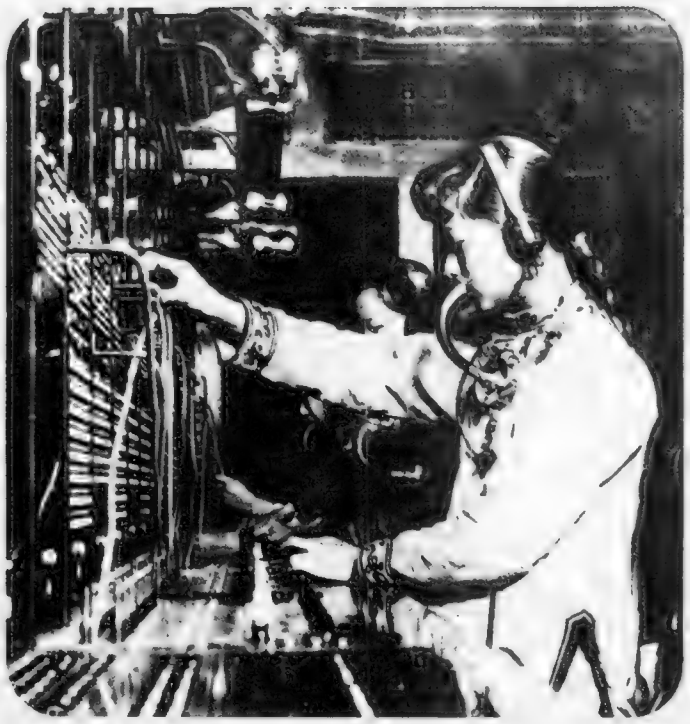
California's Japanese are regarded as particularly devoted to the beauty of flowers. But fifty years ago, Dupont Gai *at Chinese New Year was always adorned with sprays of delicate spring blossoms, especially red and white buds which signified long life and good fortune.*

Louis Stellman, childless himself, was very fond of the children of Chinatown, especially the charming (and often quite beautiful) little girls, who would parade on feast days along Dupont Gai *in all their pink, peach, or yellow silk finery.*

Boys will be boys. And East and West do meet, Rudyard Kipling notwithstanding, in San Francisco's Chinese Quarter. Americanization of Chinatown's youth was well under way by World War I, as the suspenders, knickers, and billed caps on these roughhousing youngsters suggest.

Lapsing into the Old Country mode of transport, a porter carries a tray on his head as he nonchalantly negotiates a sloping San Francisco sidewalk.

A matron adopts a Western umbrella for protection from rain as she shops for narcissus, or Chinese water lilies, for the family's New Year.



A half-century ago, a focus of tourist attention in San Francisco was the Chinese telephone exchange where, working without telephone books or numbers, the attractive operators memorized the names of all their customers.

This tiny child has been exquisitely dressed by his proud family, most likely for a holiday stroll at New Year.

Chinatown changed from both inside and outside pressures. These young, uniformed exhorters straddle the two forces. They are Christians of the Salvation Army.

The current tradition of choosing a beautiful girl to reign over Chinatown for the New Year is not a new one. Here a princess-on-horseback surveys her subjects during a halt in a Portola Festival, or Panama-Pacific Exposition (1915), parade.

Chinatown funeral processions, reflecting age-old traditions, attracted much attention among Caucasian visitors. Relatives of the deceased, following the horse-drawn hearse and cymbal-clanging Buddhist priest, wore robes and hoods of white, the mourning color in Cathay.

The Chinese equivalent of Memorial Day, or the Día de los Muertos *of the Californios, was Ching Ming. Graves were tidied up and calligraphy carefully restored to wind-weathered cemetery headboards, as photographed here in the sandy hills of Colma, south of San Francisco.*

Just as a barn could not be raised without whiskey in Ohio a century ago, so, too, no new building in San Francisco's Asian quarter was properly launched without the detonation of long strings of firecrackers to drive away evil spirits.

to the romanticized kitsch of many of his contemporaries, like the recently rediscovered Emma B. Freeman, with her "artfully" posed Indians.

Luckily, Stellman imitated Genthe. Though he was a romantic like his mentor, and liked the soft-focus, almost fuzzily poetic or "artistic" images of the day (a style copied from mezzotints by photographers who were slavishly eager to be accepted as true artists), he also preferred quick portraits and candid snapshots to carefully arranged pictures. Moreover, he refused to tinker with his negatives or prints in order to improve upon reality. The touching-up brush was not for him.

What is important about Stellman is not his technical skill, his photographic expertise, but his dedication to the task at hand—the preserving on film of a changing way of life among the most exotic of all the Old West's settlers. Even more than Genthe, he had a natural sensitivity, a sympathy and compassion, for the Chinese. He thus brought great feeling to his camera work. Where most Caucasians around the turn of the century were either annoyed by the strange ways of their "Mongolian" (!) neighbors or superciliously amused by them, Stellman honestly accepted their differences as natural and welcome.

Louis J. Stellman sought to document the struggle of adjustment of past to future (and a runaway present, sandwiched between) in the Asian quarter. That transformation, speeded up by the 'quake of 1906 and the 1911 Chinese Revolution, was further advanced by World War I.

During the time of Chinatown's metamorphosis, Stellman continued his career in journalism and free-lance writing. He began to turn out books and articles on history, travel, and current events, illustrated by his own photographs. When *Who's Who in California* asked him to list his favorite hobbies, he gave photography first place, ahead of touring and historical research. Actually, he considered photography to be far more than an avocation. He told fellow-reporter Eugene Block, "I'm not an artist with a pen, or with the brush or crayon. But I *can* be an artist with my camera."

Curiously, Stellman's plans for a Chinatown book, the subject nearest and dearest to his heart, were thwarted. An outgrowth of his lecture and slide shows was the prospectus which he submitted to publisher Mitchell Kinnerly in New York just before the outbreak of World War I. The book was to be titled *John Chinaman* (not yet recognized, in 1913, as a pejorative term). By 1917, Stellman had changed it into a small Baedeker, *Chinatown, a Pictorial Souvenir and Guide,* with text illustrated by his own photos. He went so far as to get an estimate of the cost of a 10,000-copy run and secure recommendations from prominent Chinese. Dr. Ng Poon Chew, for example, editor of the daily *Chung Sai Yat Po* and, more than anyone else, *the* leader of Chinatown, gave him a fine endorsement.

But America went to war in 1917, and Stellman shelved the book project indefinitely. In 1960 he and the writer of this article proposed a Chinatown photo essay but were turned down by New York publishers, the subject being deemed "too local." In 1961 Stellman died.

It is unfortunate that no Chinatown title appears among Stellman's published books. For although he was always an outsider and a romantic, he saw Chinatown with clarity as well as sensitivity. He called the Chinese-exclusion Geary Act of 1882 "a monstrosity." He recognized the important role played by San Francisco's small enclave in the overthrow of the Manchu Empire and the establishment of the Chinese Republic. He wrote that since 1897 "an American revolutionary junta has persistently fanned the tiny spark into the holocaust."

Stellman sought to disprove the lurid tales of subterranean opium dens, "human rabbit warrens," into which writers as intelligent as Frank Norris had blond maidens being dragged, to vanish without a trace. He never found the Chinese to be cunning and devious plotters, as did the pulp magazine hacks. Aside from the handful of murderous *boo how doy* or hatchet men of the tongs, Stellman found San Francisco's Chinese to be direct and honest, if somewhat secretive because of the horrors of the Empire's police and the fear of kinfolk that "slots," illegal immigrants, might be forced by the authorities to return to China.

Louis Stellman took his photography, like his writing, seriously. But he did not think of himself as a historian. Rather he saw himself as an interpreter of Chinese-Americans to Caucasian-Americans. He once said of his work: "Call it history, if you like. To me, it is character revelation . . . appreciation; understanding—of a man *or* of a race."

We choose to call it history. And pictorial history of a high order. Stellman failed in his goal of becoming a recognized artist-photographer, because he lacked the skills, the genius of a Genthe. But he did become a documentary historian, and one of importance in recording the story of America's farthest West, as proved by the photographs which accompany these words. **AW**

Richard H. Dillon, *director of San Francisco's Sutro Library, is the author of* Images of Chinatown: Louis J. Stellman's Chinatown Photographs *(1976) and a forthcoming biography of Commodore Oliver H. Perry,* We Have Met the Enemy.

Indian Beads and Bent's Fort

"Beads: Their Use by Upper Great Lakes Indians," is a traveling exhibit produced by the Grand Rapids Public Museum and the Cranbrook Academy of Art/Museum whose purpose is to show how beads were used by Great Lakes Indians and what they reveal about their culture. The exhibit will be on view at the Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan through January and at the **Milwaukee Public Museum** from mid-February to mid-April. Later the exhibit will go to the **Tweed Museum of Art,** University of Minnesota, Duluth (May–June); the **Neville Public Museum,** Green Bay, Wisconsin (mid-June–July); the **Jesse Besser Museum,** Alpena, Michigan (mid-August–mid-October); the **Illinois State Museum,** Springfield (November); and the **Lakeview Center for the Arts and Sciences,** Peoria, Illinois (mid-December–January 1979). An extensively illustrated 84-page exhibition catalog is available for $6.95 from the Grand Rapids Public Museum, 54 Jefferson Street, S.E., Grand Rapids 48502.

From January 15 to April 23, the newly acquired **Sid Richardson western art collection** will be on display at the **Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth**. This addition to its permanent collection will give the Carter Museum one of the most extensive assemblages of Russells and Remingtons in the world.

A major preservation battle is shaping up in **San Francisco** over the **City of Paris**, the famous preearthquake department store overlooking Union Square. Neiman-Marcus has bought the building and plans to preserve (but relocate) the noted six-story central rotunda and art-glass dome while completely rebuilding the rest of the store—thereby alarming preservationists. Architectural critic John Pastier, commenting on the plan, observed that " 'saving' a fraction of a landmark is like saving the vocal cords of a soprano while killing off the rest of the body because it is deemed undistinguished."

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, CHICAGO

SEE "BEADS, THEIR USE BY UPPER GREAT LAKES INDIANS" (LEFT)

The 28-minute film **"They Came to Build: The Reconstruction of Old Bent's Fort"** won a $1000 first prize at the **Fourth National Film and Video Competition** sponsored by the **National Trust for Historic Preservation.** Created by Dr. Richard E. Fousbee, a University of Denver assistant professor of mass communications, the film depicts the history and reconstruction of the famous old fur-trading post near La Junta, Colorado. Sixteen-millimeter prints are available on loan from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 740 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. (For more on Bent's Fort also see "Castle in the Desert: A Historical Tour of Reconstructed Bent's Fort" in the September/October 1976 issue of *The American West*.)

Strawberry School, the oldest still-standing public schoolhouse in Arizona, has been deeded to the **Arizona Historical Society.** The simple rough-log structure, which dates from the mid-1880s, is located in northern **Gila County.**

More than 600 pieces of **Spanish colonial folk art** from New Mexico and the Southwest will be on display through March 5 at the **Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe.** The exhibit, entitled "Días de Mas, Días de Menos" (Days of Plenty, Days of Want), includes examples of textiles, clothing, furniture, woodcarving, religious images, toys, and household goods.

In January 1978 the **California Historical Society** will open its **new History Center** at 6300 Wilshire Boulevard in **Los Angeles.** The center will serve as a research facility and exhibition area, and will house the noted Ticor Historical Collection, recently donated to the California Society by the Title Insurance and Trust Company. The Ticor Collection, which contains more than 50,000 photographs and other items relating to the history of Los Angeles from the 1860s to the 1940s, has been called the single most important addition ever made to the society's photographic archives.

"South and Southwest," an exhibit which explores the **images of Southern and Southwestern culture in the work of contemporary artists,** will continue at the **Fort Worth Art Museum** until January 29.

Houston's history has become more accessible to its citizens through the recently established **Houston Metropolitan Research Center,** whose goals are "to locate, preserve and make usable for research the documentary and oral evidence of Houston's past." Originally developed under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the center is now a division of the **Houston Public Library.** Initial projects have included the development of a computerized data retrieval system for historical sources, an oral history program, and a basic collection of historical materials.

Last October 12 ground was broken for the construction of a $7.5 million **Plains Indian Museum** at the **Buffalo Bill Historical Center** in **Cody, Wyoming.** With feathers in his hand and a small cedar fire smoking at his feet, John Woodenlegs addressed the four winds and offered a Northern Cheyenne prayer to bless the site; later the audience joined in a huge Indian round dance to music provided by a Shoshone-Ute group from Fort Washakie, Wyoming. AW

Saving the West

REVIEWED BY RICHARD SANDERS

THE MOUNTAIN LION eats sheep. Any animal that eats sheep can't be all bad." So begins one of the chapters in Edward Abbey's excellent new book on the American West, *The Journey Home.*

The Journey Home: Some Words in Defense of the American West by Edward Abbey *(E. P. Dutton, New York, 1977; 242 pp., intro., illus., $9.95 cloth, $4.95 paper).*

Abbey must have a thing about sheep, for I heard of him for the first time from an environmentalist friend who remarked, "Oh, yeah—Edward Abbey. He's the guy who advocates grinding up sheep and feeding them to coyotes."

Clearly, Abbey is an environmentalist with a sense of proportion equal to the solemnity of the task of trying to deal rationally with a whole world gone berserk. That's the picture this book paints —of madness, cancerous human growth, and what Abbey thinks must be done about it.

Those who read and enjoyed his *Desert Solitaire* will be equally pleased with *The Journey Home.* Those who despised him there will find new grounds here.

Abbey is disturbingly simple. In fact, he is so simple, so clear, so uncomplicated that one fears he is too simple, too clear, too uncomplicated. But he holds up. The more carefully one reads, the more right one feels he is.

"Who needs wilderness?" he asks.

"We need wilderness because we are wild animals. Every man needs a place where he can go crazy in peace. Every Boy Scout troop deserves a forest to get lost, miserable, and starving in. Even the maddest murderer of the sweetest wife should get a chance for a run to the sanctuary of the hills. If only for the sport of it. For the terror, freedom, and delirium. Because we need brutality and raw adventure, because men and women first learned to love in, under, and all around trees, because we need for every pair of feet and legs about ten leagues of naked

EDWARD ABBEY'S SELF-PORTRAIT

nature, crags to leap from, mountains to measure by, deserts to finally die in when the heart fails."

Abbey himself seems the result of the wilderness—clear and simple in his perspective on things. The wilderness has done for Abbey what it did for Thoreau —simplified. And if that is one of the benefits of wilderness, then that alone is enough to justify its existence.

But have we at last reached an end of wilderness?

That's what this book is all about—an answer to that question. Abbey is a lover, a true believer in the American West—in its deserts and forests and mountains—and he refuses to be a silent mourner at what may be the sites of its demise.

There are too many people, too few resources, not enough space. But Abbey won't read that as doom. *The Journey Home* is as much a rage against doomsayers as it is against the exploiters of our now receding wilderness. Abbey takes us through the West he loves, paints it for us, and says, this need not end. We must measure values: we must weight this beautiful land against "a Gross National Product growing ever grosser."

We can save our American West, Abbey tells us, if we can learn to forsake junk. "Reducing the production of junk is the key to the matter." If we can eliminate meaningless gadgetry, built-in obsolescence, and one-use disposable throwaway items, then we can cut down on our need for energy, reduce the amounts of water we contaminate, leave our grazing lands for cattle instead of strip-mine operations, and still maintain the West our forebears gloried in.

Not to do this is suicide, observes Abbey. Even a child can perceive, he writes, "that on our finite planet, there must be, sooner or later, a limit to quantitative growth. Any high school math student can prove that if our production of electricity continued to grow at an exponential rate of 100 percent every ten years the result would be, in less than a century, a United States of America in which every square foot of land surface was preempted by mines and power plants, leaving no room at all for homes, cities, farms, living space, or even graveyards. Growth for the sake of growth *is* the ideology of the cancer cell."

In focusing on Abbey's environmental philosophy in this review, I have not done total justice to *The Journey Home.* I have barely touched on the sardonic humor of the man, the environmentalist who throws his beer cans out the window of his car because "it's not the beer cans that are ugly; it's the highways." Anyway, he goes on to say, someday when we get serious about recycling, "we can put a million kids to work each summer picking up the cans."

Nor have I touched on his love of the pure image in language, his magnificent descriptions of the western wilderness that he so deeply believes in. But I leave that for readers to discover for themselves. Those who love this wild land of ours—from its Death Valley desert to the ruins of Hoboken—will read this book in one enraptured sitting. AW

Richard Sanders, *former author and editor of educational texts, is the speech writer for Oregon governor Bob Straub. He also teaches a journalism course at Oregon State University, Salem.*

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RECENT WESTERN BOOKS

Dorothy's World: Childhood in Sabine Bottom, 1902–1910 by Dorothy Howard *(Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1977; 298 pp., illus., $10.00).*

A former college teacher with a lifelong interest in early childhood has written a composite book about her own formative years on an East Texas farm near the turn of the century. Combining an objective and detailed accounting of farm, home, and play life with a sensitive portrayal of her personal feelings and experiences, this thoughtful book is both psychologically modern and nostalgic for a time long gone.

Walk in Beauty: The Navajo and Their Blankets by Anthony Berlant and Mary Hunt Kahlenberg *(New York Graphic Society, Boston, 1977; 167 pp., illus., map, intro., appen., notes, biblio, index, $27.50).*

In this beautiful and authoritative book, the authors draw a sensitive portrait of the Navajo people through a series of essays on their history and culture as well as through detailed descriptions of their blankets. A pleasure both to look at and read, this large-format book contains sixty-four color plates and eighty-five black and white illustrations.

An Uncommon Guide to San Luis Obispo County, California by Georgia Lee, Vicki León, and Lachlan MacDonald *(Padre Productions, San Luis Obispo, 1977; 160 pp., illus., map, $4.95 paper).*

This charmingly illustrated, history-oriented guide to San Luis Obispo is ordered alphabetically in categories ranging from Adobes and Chumash Indians to Victorians and Vigilantes.

By Sea to San Francisco, 1849–50: The Journal of Dr. James Morison edited by Lonnie J. White and William R. Gillaspie *(Memphis State University, Memphis, 1977; 61 pp., illus., map, intro., notes, index, $5.95 paper).*

During the Gold Rush, Dr. James Morison of New Hampshire traveled via the Strait of Magellan to California, where he intended to practice medicine. His detailed and perceptive observations of the six-month, 13,000-nautical-mile voyage, which included stops in many Latin ports, are reproduced in this small book.

The Hospital at the End of the Santa Fe Trail: A Photographic History of St. Vincent Hospital, Santa Fe, New Mexico by Clark Kimball and Marcus J. Smith, M.D. *(Rydal Press, Santa Fe, 1977; 137 pp., illus., intro., biblio., $8.95 paper, all proceeds for the benefit of the hospital).*

Founded in 1865 by Santa Fe's famed archbishop, John B. Lamy, St. Vincent Hospital was the first to open its doors in New Mexico Territory. This small book recounts the hospital's history and includes sixty photographs from its early years.

Historic Glimpses of Trees of the West by Lambert Florin *(Superior Publishing Company, Seattle, 1977; 192 pp., illus., index, $13.95).*

Numerous black and white photographs of western trees and lively commentary on their history should make this informal book of interest to western gardeners and amateur naturalists.

With Nature's Children: Emma B. Freeman (1880–1928)—Camera and Brush by Peter E. Palmquist *(Interface California Corporation, Eureka, 1976; 134 pp., illus., map, intro., appen., biblio., $9.95 paper).*

In the early 1900s, romantic and rebellious Emma Freeman lived in a small northern California town where she helped her husband run an art and photography store. She also photographed Indians of the region, collected a circle of bohemian friends, and ran off temporarily with a traveling chautauqua orator. Peter Palmquist's sensitive text depicts a woman both spirited and foolish, struggling against the limitations of a narrow existence. Also included are many examples of Freeman's photography.

The Queen City: A History of Denver by Lyle W. Dorsett *(Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder, Colorado, 1977; 320 pp., illus., biblio., index, $12.50).*

Denver's history began in 1858–59 when reports of gold lured prospectors to the area. This thorough study of the city, written by a University of Denver professor who specializes in urban history, is the first volume in the publisher's projected Western Urban History Series.

Continued on page 61

Wounded Knee Revisited

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM P. MACKINNON

THOSE SEEKING SOURCES on the Indian wars as well as the transcript of a donnybrook over historical interpretation will find both in *Wounded Knee Massacre,* the Senate Judiciary Committee's 1976 hearings on the 1890 military action in South Dakota.

Wounded Knee Massacre: Hearings Before the Senate Judiciary Committee on S. 1147 and S. 2900 *(U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1976; 596 pp., paper).*

Technically, the hearings were held to consider legislation introduced by Sen. James Abourezk (D., South Dakota) to compensate with $3,000 each of the descendants of those more than one hundred and fifty Sioux killed or injured at Wounded Knee. On a broader scope, the hearings attempted to establish that the action was a "massacre" prompted by the Seventh Cavalry's alleged desire to avenge Custer's 1876 defeat. Although only one other legislator joined Abourezk in the hearings, the committee heard comments sympathetic to the Sioux position from Dee A. Brown, author of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and a committee consultant, members of the Wounded Knee Survivors' Association as well as from two scholars prominent in the study of the Indian wars—Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., and Robert M. Utley. The army was represented by Charles Ablard, general counsel for the Army Department, and William G. Bell, an army historian. They spent much of their time explaining a controversial memorandum submitted in August 1975 by Acting Army Secretary Norman R. Augustine. That document—now printed with the transcript of the hearings—may well prove to be a classic of its kind.

Citing passages from recent analyses by Gen. S. L. A. Marshall, Brown, Utley, and William F. Kelley as well as contemporary government reports, Augustine had expressed sympathy for casualties among innocent Indians *and* soldiers but opposed compensatory legislation as "inequitable and inappropriate" in view of the army's belief that Indians were responsible for the shooting. Augustine further argued that "the civilian authorities and the Army showed great restraint and compassion in the events leading up to [and during] that encounter . . . [its] characterization . . . as a 'massacre' is unfair and inaccurate."

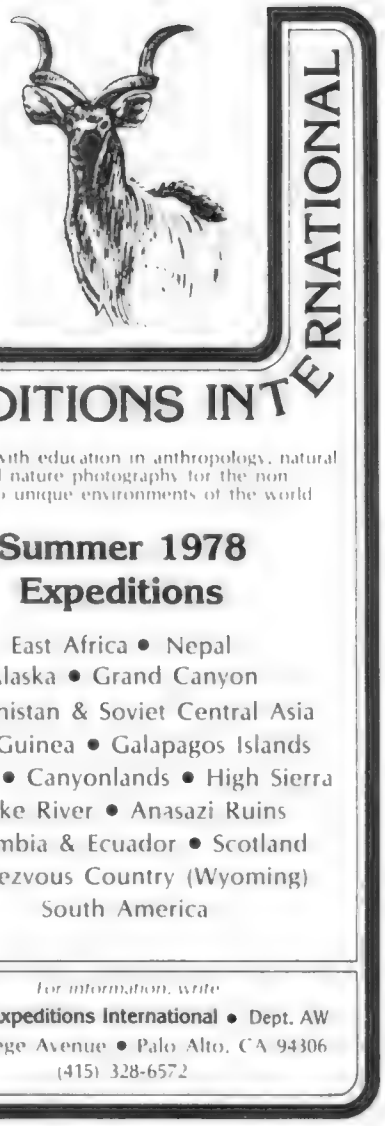
When the Augustine memo somehow surfaced to public view in December 1975, virtually on the eve of the hearings, a press uproar ensued. The result was an emotional two-day series of hearings that may have, in effect, forced Sen. Abourezk and his supporting witnesses into taking somewhat extreme positions. Abourezk, for example, spoke of a "massacre" resulting from an army "setup." Josephy, in turn, hinted at racism and challenged the Augustine memo as "a curious and appalling letter . . . a patronizing and ethnocentric document."

The army's witnesses then testified with a firm but substantially less pointed defense of the military's position than that previously offered by Augustine. In the process, Bell characterized the document as a "staff paper" with "no pretense to being a scholarly report," acknowledged that it had been hastily drafted by military attorneys and that "we in the [army] historical office have some heartburn over parts of it but that is the way things go."

On balance, *Wounded Knee Massacre*—with its conflicting documentation and testimony—provides an excellent vehicle for studying history through the case method. It also offers a "minor" in political science because of its unmistakable association with the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, the 1976 elections, the 1973 conflict at Wounded Knee, and the centennial of Custer's death.

It can also be viewed within the context of recent attempts to rewrite military history by redressing what various individuals or groups believe were historical injustices. Thus executive and legislative actions have been aimed posthumously at rehabilitating Maj. Benedict Arnold and Maj. Marcus A. Reno; promoting Gen. George Washington; restoring the citizenship of Gen. Robert E. Lee; pardoning Dr. Samuel Mudd and Pvt. Eddie Slovik; and restoring honor to the troops of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry (Colored) dismissed en masse after the 1906 raid in Brownsville, Texas. AW

William P. MacKinnon *has written for this and other publications on Indian, Mormon, and military affairs in the West.*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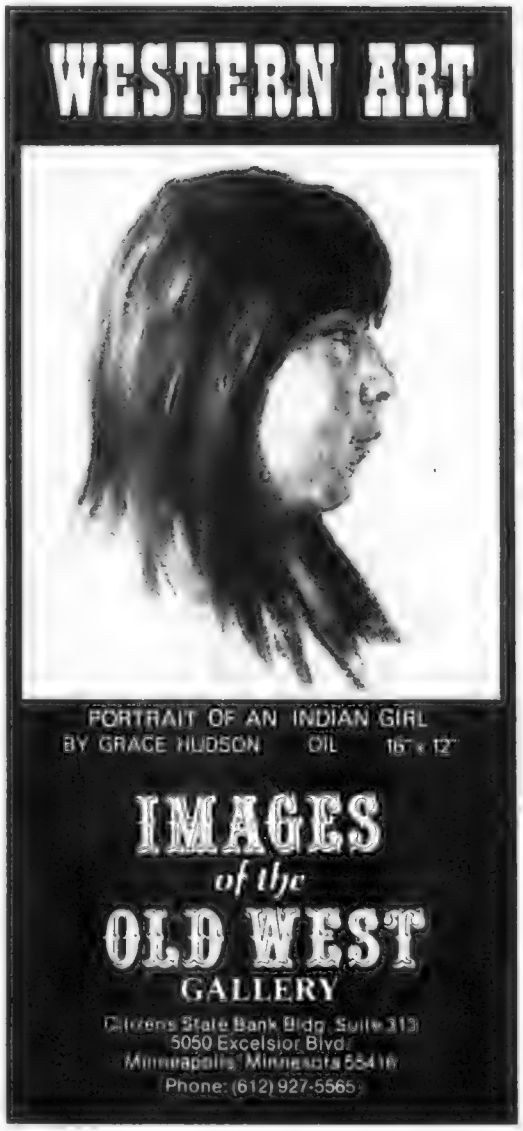

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Japanese Internment

REVIEWED BY BRIAN MCGINTY

AMERICANS of Caucasian ancestry who remember the uneasy, fearful first months of United States involvement in World War II, months during which the world watched with mounting anxiety as forces of the Japanese Empire moved like a juggernaut through China, the Philippines, Southeast Asia, and strategic islands of the Pacific—particularly those Americans who lived along the Pacific Coast in the ominous days that followed Pearl Harbor—must approach any consideration of the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the coast with distaste. We who lived through those apprehensive days were told—by the media, by political leaders, by military authorities—that the Japanese Americans who lived among us were disloyal and treacherous, that they were predisposed by ethnic traits and ancestral loyalties to engage in acts of sabotage and treason. It mattered not that a large part of the condemned group were American citizens, some veterans of World War I. "A Jap's a Jap," said Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command. Most of us accepted the general's pejorative tautology without question.

During and after the war, we learned of the extraordinary valor and heroism shown by Japanese American servicemen in combat. We learned that more than 100,000 Japanese Americans in Hawaii (who were not evacuated or interned) served their country ably and loyally throughout the conflict. Tardily realizing that the exclusion of our fellow-citizens from the Pacific Coast was not *justified*, legally or morally, we sought facts which would show it to have been at least *understandable*. If we could not *defend* the exclusion, at least—we thought—we could *explain* it.

Recent scholarship shows more than ever the futility of even this limited effort. It is increasingly clear that the evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans grew out of deep-seated racial prejudice which had plagued the Pacific Coast long before Pearl Harbor. The "military necessity" which President Roosevelt and his advisors urged as justification for the exclusion did not exist. Moreover, it is clear that long before the president terminated the exclusion (probably even before he ordered it), he knew —or should have known—that the "military necessity" was largely fictitious.

Michi Weglyn is an American of Japanese descent who was born and raised in California's Contra Costa County. As a teen-ager, she was interned in the Gila Relocation Center in Arizona. Although *Years of Infamy* is marred by an awkward literary style and by frequent and annoying polemical flights, it is crammed with revealing, often-disturbing facts which demonstrate the egregious error of the exclusion and describe the stultifying conditions of camp life. She discusses in detail the now painfully embarrassing Munson Report, prepared for the State Department shortly before Pearl Harbor, which persuasively argued that Japanese Americans would not be "more disloyal than any other racial group in the United States with whom we went to war." The report was submitted to the president before he ordered the evacuation, but he was not deterred by it.

Heart Mountain, which surveys the history of a single "relocation" camp, is more modest in scope than *Years of Infamy*. It is also more gracefully written. In it, Douglas Nelson dispels the myth that Heart Mountain, Wyoming, was a "happy camp." He shows the hardships and indignities suffered by its inmates and the vigorous efforts made by many of them to protest their miserable plight.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, FDR promised the American people: "We will not under any threat, or in face of any danger, surrender the guarantees of liberty our forefathers framed for us in the Bill of Rights." Weglyn and Nelson demonstrate how hollow that promise proved to be. AW

Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps by Michi Weglyn *(William Morrow, New York, 1976; 351 pp., intro., illus., biblio., appen., notes, index, $10.95).*

Heart Mountain: The History of an Amer-America's Concentration Camps by Midhi Nelson *(State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1976; 193 pp., biblio., index, $12.50).*

Brian McGinty *is an attorney and writer who lives in San Francisco. His articles on subjects of historical interest have appeared in* The American West *and numerous other publications.*

Cavalry Wife: The Diary of Eveline M. Alexander, 1866–1867, edited by Sandra L. Myres *(Texas A&M University, College Station, 1977; 175 pp., intro., illus., maps, biblio., appen., notes, index, $10.00).*

A Governor's Wife on the Mining Frontier: The Letters of Mary Edgerton from Montana, 1863–1865, edited by James L. Thane, Jr. *(University of Utah Library, Salt Lake City, 1976; 148 pp., intro., illus., biblio., index, $8.50).*

REVIEWED BY JEANNE SCHINTO

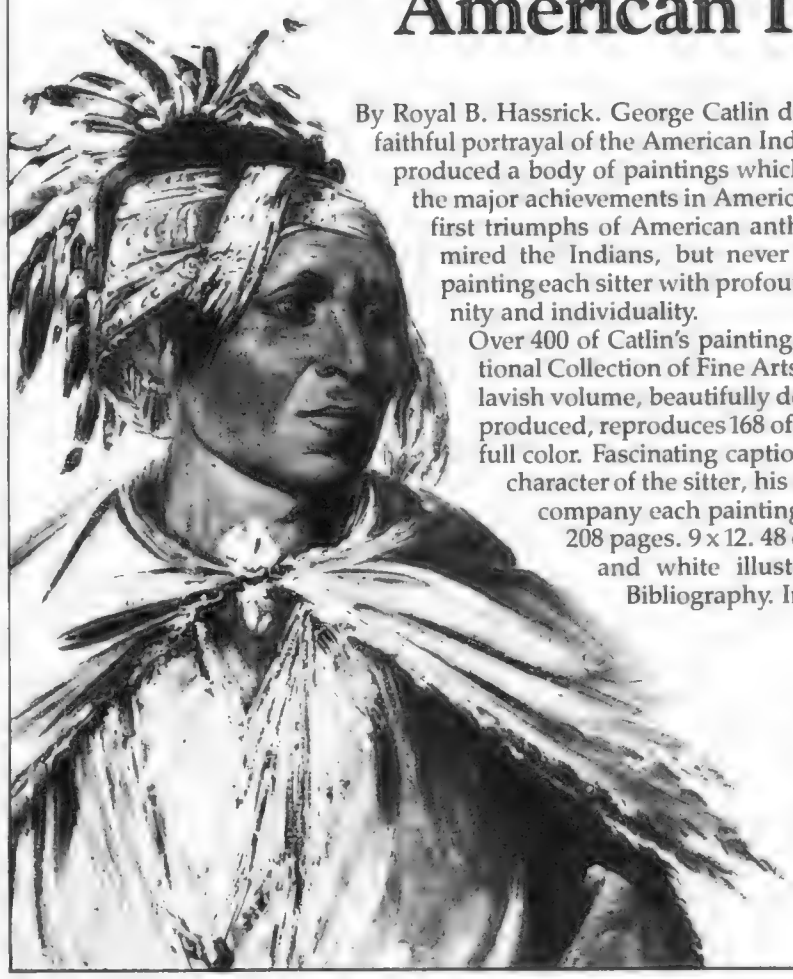
A U.S. ARMY CAVALRY unit was crossing the Antelope Mountains between Indian Territory and Texas when the men spied a pole with something waving from it. An officer sent someone to investigate, and what he retrieved was described by the officer's wife in her diary. It was a scalp "dried and stretched within a small reed hoop" and "fastened securely to the pole with thongs of buckskin." So Eveline M. Alexander wrote in the laconic style of a sharp-eyed reporter. Her journal is full of such detail—of hounds trailing deer scent; horses stampeding; conversations with an aging Kit Carson. And it is precisely her writing style which makes the account of her trip from New York to New Mexico such good reading.

Eveline Alexander's editor suggests that the diary is perfunctory because copies were sent home to an anxious family. However, the family was a creative one—her father, a gentleman farmer, wrote a newspaper column; a brother helped found the *Harvard Lampoon*. More likely they simply enjoyed Eveline Alexander's crisp observations far more than they would have the self-conscious sop so characteristic of many other frontier wives' letters home.

Mary Edgerton, the governor's wife, is one of those whiners. Her correspondence is redeemed, though, by myriad details of daily living—the price of baking soda, the scarcity of butter, for example—that most other accounts of mining-town life, almost invariably written by men, omit. Accordingly, by way of letters to her mother and twin sister back home in Ohio, Mary Edgerton has left us with a valuable primary source—even though at one point she wails, "I will try to write to you today but really do not know what to write to make my letter interesting to you or anyone." AW

Jeanne Schinto *writes on historical topics of contemporary interest for* The American West *and other publications.*

The George Catlin Book of American Indians



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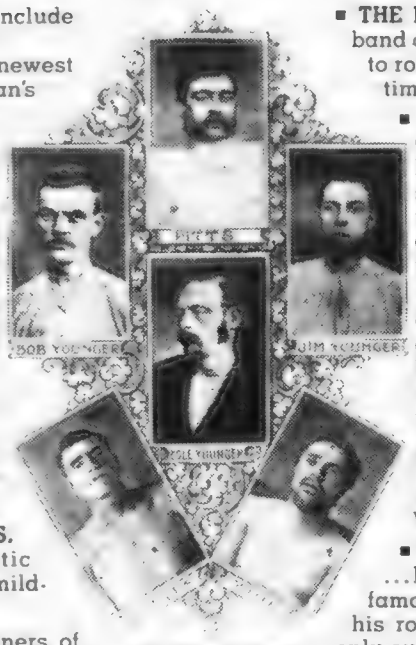

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Chronicles of the Big Bend: A Photographic Memoir of Life on the Border by W. D. Smithers, foreword by Kenneth B. Ragsdale *(Madrona Press, Austin, 1976; 158 pp., illus., index, $11.95).*

Tales of the Big Bend by Elton Miles *(Texas A&M University, College Station, 1976; 189 pp., illus., notes, index, $10.00).*

REVIEWED BY AL LOWMAN

THE BIG BEND COUNTRY of west Texas has long attracted historians and writers who have produced a steady trickle of literature on the subject. Suddenly within a twelve-month period, the trickle has swelled to a minor deluge with the appearance of first-rate works by Ron Tyler, Ken Ragsdale, and the two items now reviewed.

Chronicles of the Big Bend is a tantalizing sampling of the W. D. Smithers photographic archive now housed in the Humanities Research Center of the University of Texas at Austin. The text which Smithers has provided reveals a man apparently blessed with total recall of the circumstances surrounding practically every photograph taken in a fifty-year career.

And what an adventurous career it has been. As a teen-ager he documented the birth of military aviation at San Antonio and its subsequent employment in Pershing's campaign against Pancho Villa. Here too are the inhabitants of Texas's most distant frontier: ranch families, peons and prospectors, rangers and bandidos, as well as its flora and fauna.

Separate chapters are devoted to Smithers's experiences with two classes of borderland inhabitants whose vocations were born of vast distances and sparse population: the *avisadores* who signal messages with mirrors and the *curanderos* who treat sickness with healing herbs. In sum, this is a pictorial record of great import.

Elton Miles's achievement may be disposed of in fewer words, but it commands no less enthusiasm. These oft-told tales have never been better told. Each has roots in historical fact—fact which may be sacrificed, however, when "the truth doesn't do it justice." The result is an admirable and entertaining collection of folklore that greatly enriches the growing body of Big Bend literature. AW

Al Lowman *is a research associate at the University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio.*

WESTERN BOOKS

(Continued from page 56)

The Language of the Railroader by Ramon F. Adams *(University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1977; 180 pp., $9.95).*

"Angel's seat," "clinker boy," "ashcat," "crumb boss," "hogger"—western lexicographer Ramon F. Adams has compiled a dictionary of such colorful railroad terms, using early-day publications and old-time railway workers as his sources.

The Portfolios of Ansel Adams by Ansel Adams with an introduction by John Szarkowski *(New York Graphic Society, Boston, 1977; 124 pp., illus., $19.50).*

When Ansel Adams took his first photographs at age fourteen, his subject was Yosemite, and since that time he has continued to concentrate on the western landscape. This beautiful book consists of seven portfolios produced by Adams between 1948 and 1976, each previously available only in a limited edition. AW

Mari Sandoz

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WALLACE STEGNER

(Continued from page 37)

thick with former Stanford writers. Some of them are among the best writers of their age and time. I like their company when I have it, and I read their books with pleasure, and I don't worry that they are of many kinds, and that none of the kinds is much like my own.

During the past forty years, you have been much concerned with the regional novel. You have criticized it (in The Writer in America), *resurrected one of its practitioners (in* Angle of Repose), *and you are yourself a novelist of region. Is the regional novel alive and well in America today?*

I am not sure what the regional novel is. If it is a novel laid in some recognizable section or locality, then practically every novel in the bookstores is a regional novel. Mine are mainly novels about one or another part of the West. John Cheever has to be read in terms of Connecticut bedroom communities. Updike has as clearly-defined a territory as a mockingbird. Eudora Welty, Walker Percy, Robert Penn Warren, Larry McMurtry, and five hundred novelists of lesser visibility all are grounded on some piece of earth, in some variety of the American society. The Jewish writers as a group have a tendency to exploit ethnicity rather than region, but even the terms of ethnicity force them into primarily urban and essentially similar sets of circumstances. Blacks, so far, seem to have a choice between the cotton field and the ghetto, and that goes even for the best of them, and one of the best of our writers, Ralph Ellison.

I don't think place and identity are escapable. To that extent a big mosaic of a country like the United States will always have its sectional flavors in literature.

But if by "regional novel" you mean a novel which self-consciously exploits the picturesqueness of a region, then you simply have local color. I love Santa Fe and many Santa Feans, but I have to confess that much of the literature produced in Santa Fe and Taos wears too much turquoise and pads around too self-consciously in squaw boots. It is written primarily by outsiders, who may range all the way from the latest tourists to people who were born in New Mexico and grew up speaking Spanish and going to dances at the pueblos, but who are nevertheless Anglos, and outsiders. Some day I want to see a novel out of New Mexico that grapples with that whole multi-cultural stew, instead of reverting to an anthropological stance and confining itself to the delight-makers or the man who killed the deer.

The best answer I know to those who cite the impossibility of being regional without being in some sense an exploiter of the picturesque is the advice William Dean Howells gave somebody who was concerned about how to

be an American. "Be as American as you unconsciously can," Howells told him. In other words, be yourself. If you're a novelist, you can only be yourself by writing within what you know. If that's regionalism, make the most of it.

One thing I do wish: I wish the publishing industry were distributed throughout all the regions instead of being confined in the most arrogantly provincial of them. One of the reasons some people sound shrilly regional is that they aren't getting a hearing. At the same time, I see no way of attracting attention simply by making a noise. Until we do get a better distribution of publishing and of the book-review media, the only thing anyone can do is try to build his mousetrap, and build it not in the terms of those who are ignoring him, but in the terms of his own place and people.

You are the author of four very good—and very different—biographies. Over the past quarter-century you have tried your hand at the fictional treatment of actual lives (Joe Hill, Angle of Repose), *the more or less straightforward biography of a memorable individual* (The Uneasy Chair), *and the chronicle of an important American career* (Beyond the Hundredth Meridian). *Given the range and extent of your experience with biography, you must have feelings about the current state of the art. Who are your favorite biographers, and why?*

Unfortunately I am more ignorant than you would ever suspect. I am not a great reader of biography except when I am mining historical facts for one purpose or another. I suppose I have read the standard essays on the subject of biography—Lytton Strachey, Andre Maurois, Leon Edel, some others—and I respect biography as a form of literary art. Sometimes I think that my own novels sound like biography, and my biographies like novels, which will give you an idea of where my inclinations lead me. The Life and Letters sort of thing I am not good at or much interested in. The life as an exemplum, as an instructive story, is more my dish. Both the Powell and the DeVoto books were really of that kind—both were stories of instructive American careers with personalities attached. Both *Joe Hill* and *Angle of Repose,* as you say, are fictional treatments—which means they are *not* treatments of real lives. They are treatments of lives that have been selected because they seemed to demonstrate something, and then have been (I hope subtly) warped to demonstrate it, without overtly seeming to demonstrate it at all.

The state of the art of biography I can't comment on, except to say this: literary biography, which is the kind I most read (and I include autobiography) is peculiar in that it invariably deals with one who, in Mark Twain's phrase, "knows how to tell them." *Them* being lies. And yet literary biography is often marked by an extreme candor, either about oneself as in Storm Jameson's splendid autobiography *Journey from the North* or about another, as in Lawrance Thompson's three-volume study of Robert Frost. I don't like exposés or public confession or showing off before God, and so a book of reminiscences such as the recent one by Tennessee Williams repels me. On the other hand, Thompson's *Frost* grapples with a great, complex, difficult, tormented man and tries to treat him honestly, and my fury in that case takes a different direction, against book reviewers who use such an honest book as the excuse for a waspish tirade against Frost himself.

People, you see, bleed. That is one of the things that makes them forever fascinating. And biographies bleed, which makes them perennially interesting. My private feeling, however, is that neither people nor biographies always bleed in the places and to the extent that my inclinations suggest. That is why I really do prefer novels. But real novels, novels *about* something, novels dealing with people in real and tangible societies. Which is to say, novels that are not too far, in subject and treatment, from biography.

It is well known that the historical sections of Angle of Repose *are loosely based on the life of the nineteenth-century writer and illustrator, Mary Hallock Foote. Publication of the novel seems to have inspired a revival of interest in Mrs. Foote's work: an edition of her reminiscences, as well as several critical articles, have appeared since 1971. Have any of these writers taken issue with the interpretation implicit in* Angle of Repose? *How do their different viewpoints compare with your own?*

I simply don't know. I have seen an article which examines Mrs. Foote as an example of the career woman of her time, and I have seen but not read carefully Rodman Paul's edition of Mrs. Foote's reminiscences. Mr. Paul, I believe, has some reservations about the way I mixed fact and fiction in *Angle of Repose*. My defense is that, without that mixture, the novel would have been thinner and simpler and, to me at least, altogether less satisfying. If I had been writing Mrs. Foote's biography, I would naturally have been scrupulous to stay within the facts. Since I was writing a novel, and had been encouraged to do so by the family, I felt free to invent where invention would be better than history—and by "better" I mean more dramatic, truer to the probabilities of time, place, and character, and even more revealing of historical fact. The only real complaint I have had came from Howard Mumford Jones, who chided me with putting all those national figures in a Leadville log cabin. In that case I violated probability because I was relying on literal fact. They *were* there.

The point here, it seems to me, is that I was not making an "interpretation" of Mary Hallock Foote, who was an admirable artist and quite a good writer and who lived an exemplary life and died well loved at the age of ninety or more, and who during her life experienced a wide swath of the West. I was using such a woman as Mary Hallock Foote was, to create another woman, Susan Burling Ward. To Susan Burling Ward I gave Mary Foote's talents and a lot of her experience; I also gave her a personal life a little more darkly shadowed, and a fate that was altogether out of the range of Mary Foote's modest and productive character.

The distinction is between biography and fiction. I was writing fiction.

In the fall of 1976, the city of San Francisco honored you —as well as our nation's Bicentennial—by commissioning an operatic interpretation of your Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, Angle of Repose. *The task was formidable, and the performance, controversial. Oakley Hall's ruthlessly compressed libretto departs from the novel in both plot and character. Andrew Imbrie's score is a daring combination of nontonal and folk music. How do you think the opera fares in relation to your personal artistic objective, "the middle ground"—i.e., the dramatic rendering of persons, places, and events in a way that contributes to the discovery and articulation of continuities between past and present?*

It would have been ungrateful of me not to like the opera that Andrew Imbrie, Oakley Hall, and the San Francisco Opera Company made of *Angle of Repose.* Two gifted people labored on it for more than a year. Two or three hundred other gifted people worked for months to stage it. I did like it. I like the music and find Imbrie's combining of traditional and contemporary modes both interesting and, in the circumstances, *right:* the music itself is a way of separating the nineteenth from the twentieth century. I admire Oakley Hall's libretto for the way it hangs onto the essential—which for me is the play back and forth between times and societies—while reducing the plot to something that can be sung in less than three hours. I like the way Susan's letters to Augusta have been made to do the duty of arias, while at the same time helping with the exposition, delineating character, and communicating high points of emotion. If the opera were playing next week in San Francisco, I would be the first in line for tickets. ("I met a novelist who cried, reading his own stuff in his drink.")

On the other hand, let us be cautious about the "middle ground." I do not mean to support the middle ground if it means literally that which is not extreme, and therefore safe. The middle does not scare or offend me, as it does some people who think "middle class" and "middlebrow" terms of the greatest contempt. But I don't want to get trapped in it, either. I want to be able to use the ladder all the way from the cellar stairs to the roof, and if I spend a lot of time on the first and second floors, or on the stairs between them, that doesn't mean I may not want sometime to inspect the chimney, or look in on the furnace room. What it is fair to say is that I suspect the extremes at least as much as the middle, maybe more, but wouldn't want to make a case for excluding either. Fiction is people. People are of all kinds, the wildest variety. I will write about people I would hate to live with, and live with people I couldn't find anything very interesting to write about. And I do like to stick reasonably close to the (sometimes heightened) facts of life and history. That's why *Angle of Repose,* a western novel, has very few of the western props; and why, a Victorian novel, it half spoofs the Victorians; and why, a contemporary novel, it tries neither to ignore nor misstate the past.

Your most recent novel, The Spectator Bird, *employs most of the distinctive technical features—first-person narration flashback, frame structure—that figured in the success of your Pulitzer Prize-winning novel,* Angle of Repose. *What do you find to be the special advantages of these devices? Will they continue to find a place in your work?*

The shape a novel takes is the shape it feels most comfortable with—the shape that lets it get said. The devices it uses are those that give it its voice. And since novelists are people, with people's experience, and since most of us have one overbearing story to tell, and tell it in many ways, over and over, often without being aware that we are repeating—then it is natural that our shapes and devices come to have a certain outline and heft, a personal quality. The reason why *The Spectator Bird* has some of the same devices, and the same playing back and forth between past and present, as *Angle of Repose,* is that the same man wrote them both. And wrote them, moreover, after he was sixty, after he had begun to realize how much history mattered to him, how inevitably his every excursion into the present was going to take him through the past.

I make no case for first-person narration per se. Sometimes, in fact, it is simply an invitation to sprawl, to be windy and autobioloquacious. In the two novels we are talking about, it does have a distinct advantage, for it lets the present *comment* on the past, it provides a built-in *raisonneur* and ruminator. It makes transition between present and past and past and present as simple as a phrase; and I hope it offers, in addition, a certain resonance. Lyman Ward and Joe Allston are forms of seismic exploration. They can both send down a charge, and listen for its echo.

As for what place they may find in my future work—I don't know. The novel I am presently writing is, at least for now, in the first person. I think the justifications for the method are less clear here, however, than in either *Angle of Repose* or *Spectator Bird,* and it might well be that when the book appears it will be modestly clothed in third person singular.

What literary plans do you have for the future?

For the immediate future I will be finishing the current novel, which has no title but seems to be an extension, and in some ways a recapitulation from an altogether different stance, of *The Big Rock Candy Mountain.* Give me time and I'll write that novel five ways, like a colossal *Ring and the Book.* I expect to finish it in 1977, which will leave me at the age of sixty-nine with most of my more obvious chores done. After that I will look around and see what I can do that needs doing. **AW**

Forrest G. Robinson *is an associate professor of English and American literature at the University of California at Santa Cruz. His publications include an edition of Sir Philip Sidney's* Apology for Poetry *and* The Shape of Things Known: Sidney's Apology in Its Philosophical Tradition *(Harvard University, 1972).*

Margaret G. Robinson *is a reference librarian at the University of California at Santa Cruz. She is coauthor, with Forrest Robinson, of the recently published* Wallace Stegner *(Twayne, 1977), the first full-length study of Stegner's life and work.*

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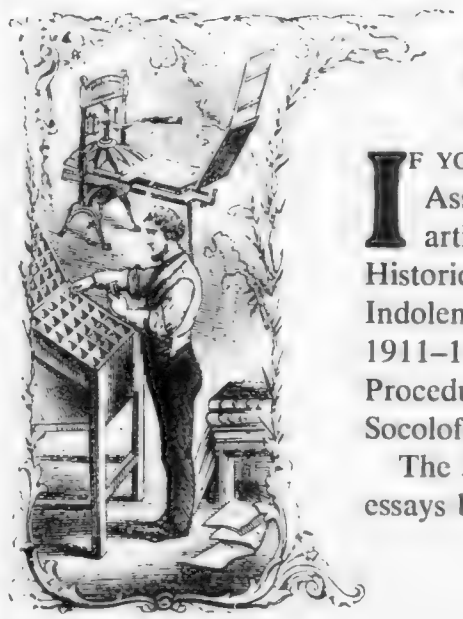

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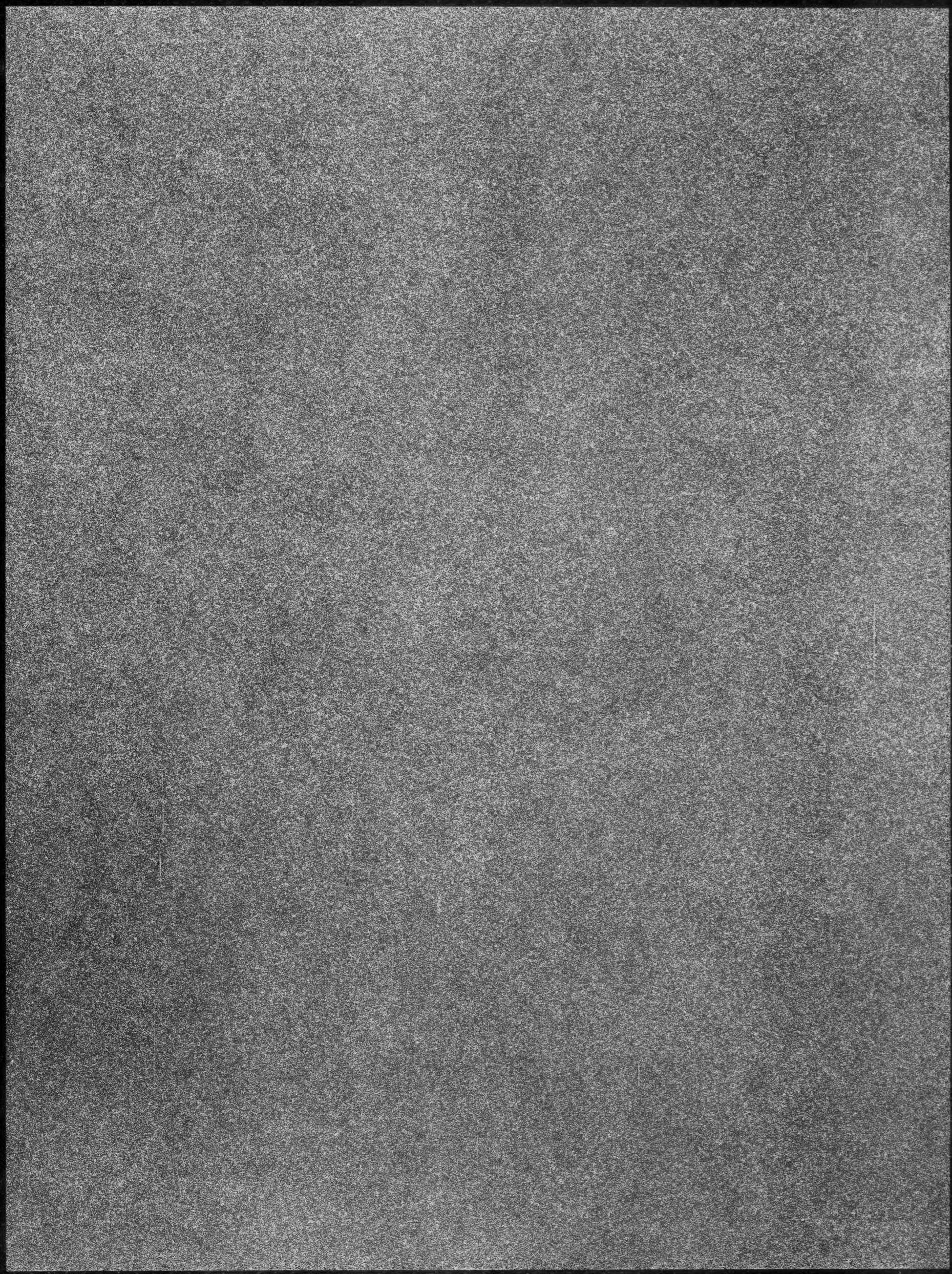
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